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# A GRATEFUL SPIRIT

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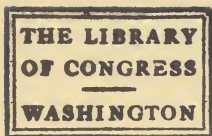
## SERMONS

— BY —

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JAMES VILA BLAKE



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## PREFACE.

These Sermons are published because they were asked for. Neither have I chosen the discourses. I have printed those desired by the people. If the request for them mean that the Sermons may give help, strength, cheer, comfort, anywhere, I am glad and thankful.

J. V. B.

Chicago, August, 1890.



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This Book is Inscribed to

HAZEN J. BURTON,

It being Three-fold his,—

By friendship,

By my Admiration,

By his fostering Hand.

## ERRATA.

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Page 20. In the twentieth line, for *faithfulness* read *faithlessness*.

Page 52. For *Milton* read *Thomson*. *Milton* has the thought, *P. L.* 713; but the words are Thomson's, *Autumn*, 204.

Page 119. In the twelfth line, for *he lot* read *helot*.

Page 203. In the twenty-first line, for *feeling* read *feelings*.

Page 286. In the thirtieth line, for *Furners* read *Furness*.



## A GRATEFUL SPIRIT.

---

"O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good."

—PSALM CXVIII, 1.

It is my purpose to offer you some thoughts about gratefulness; for this virtue always is in place, pressing on a right heart, and therefore thoughts about it always useful, I hope. What I have to say flows from this one truth, that I find gratefulness to be an instance under the universal law of repayment or justice. It has been called, very finely I think, "the justice of the heart."

It is according to nature that we should pay for whatever is of so much value that we wish it. In many different ways this payment is exacted; and whether it is levied by man or nature, it is not to be escaped.

Very often we pay the cost to men, and as it seems perhaps on the surface, the whole cost, as when we buy any article of use or beauty. But very often we pay the whole cost to nature; which is to say, we are obliged to satisfy nature's conditions before we can attain the object, as when we dig in a mine for wealth or learn hard sciences by the labors of observation and reflection. More often still, we pay both men and nature, as when we acquire skill in any art, pictorial, plastic, musical, mechanical, paying the teacher with money, but satisfying nature with application. In either case it is a payment by matter, I mean by giving so much of substance or material for what we wish; for whether we pay the teacher with valuable materials, or satisfy nature with the consumption of muscle and brain, it is the same fact; a material payment is made. Moreover, beforehand we paid muscle and brain for the values in property which we pay to the teacher; so that in the end, in whatever case, we pay by consuming ourselves, by using up our

bodies for what we wish. In the words of Jesus, "virtue goes out from" us, and we pay of our very bodies, either to fix them in capital values, or to purchase the immortal values of the mind. And what a thought! what a thought this is (just to touch it in passing, for I cannot pause on it), that by this material payment, by simply paying off bits from our unfixed and ebbing substance, we buy the spiritual and the everlasting.

But now, while always we must pay for what we get, it often appears that there is no equivalent material at hand wherewith to pay, none at hand I say, and none to be found. This is because the benefits we receive are beyond all price. There are costly things that transcend payment, life, liberty, love, a sacrifice for friendship, a gentle word of warning just in time, a helping hand just at the right instant, an inspiring example, a forbearing charity, sometimes just a sympathetic understanding of us. What shall we do with these things, which it seems we cannot pay for? Justice then arrives, as I figure it, at a bar, at a high gate, at its limits or boundary; and there it must stay if it have no higher thought of itself than the material payment which I have spoken of. But if it have a higher thought, then it takes a leap over into love. Love repays with itself, that is to say with gratefulness. And this is a payment that satisfies the equation. On the one side appears a benefit past all commercial valuation, on the other side, an inestimable return.

Now if we have a grateful spirit, and labor and yearn above all things to do first the justice of payment, and then that which is so heavenly and far beyond what we mean by justice, then to speak our thanksgiving is this gratitude put into form. We embody it, which is the same thing as to make it lovely in appearance to other persons. This expression is the beauty of it, its music, its oration, its poem;—the beauty of gratefulness, as appears when it fills a face or an attitude with grace, or an eye with unshed but most visible tears. The music of it, when it attunes the voice to a gentle and sweet tone. The oration of it, when it makes the dumb eloquent, as I have heard it. And the poem of it, when it breaks forth into hymns and praise, with rapture. There is naught that exceeds the simple and glorious eloquence which sometimes leaps like the morning

light from pure gratefulness of feeling. A friend wrote me once, very early in the morning, "A lovely morning this, so crisp and bright. At my window is a poplar tree whose green rustling leaves are a great pleasure to me. If I were lonely, they would talk. But I have no time for loneliness. What a blessing, after all, lies in this constant business." This is the simple eloquence (and how beautiful!) of a grateful heart.

In a word, plainly, this speaking is gratefulness manifested by word and sign, and gratefulness is but a continuation of justice, as I have said, being but spiritual payment for a benefit too great or too sacred for material remuneration. Well now, follow a little this idea of gratefulness as justice, "the justice of the heart." For when did ever justice lead astray? We speak of Justice as the "Blind Goddess;" but when did not even the blind follow the blind goddess safely, as if the blaze of noon-day had somehow struck from within on the eyes closed outwardly!

It will appear that the benefit which calls forth gratitude, if we look at it, must be a *just* benefit. No sentiment worthy of this good name of gratefulness can arise for a boon to ourselves which is an injustice or an evil to others. We could not be thankful, for example, to one who should aid us with stolen goods; for if he told us they were stolen, he would but make us party to the crime; and if he told us not, then it would be but a treachery to us, which we could not give thanks for when we learned it. Attention, favor, honor, no matter what, *anything*, at the expense of another's righteous dues, or sensitive feelings even, can create no gratefulness. One who accepted these things or thought them advantageous, still would be unable to profane with them the shrine of a grateful spirit; for this spirit flames forth to meet only the just, the noble, the pure deed. In fine, there is no way of being truly grateful for anything we ought not to have. I suspect the philosophy of this truth may be a deep-seated instinct, belonging to the sociable nature of man, namely, that an apparent benefit to ourselves, which is an injustice to another, cannot really be a benefit, or even an advantage, and therefore calls for no gratefulness. That can never be good for one which is bad for another. The human family, ay, and all beings, are a unit in circumstance, bound all together by "the chain of things, which the next unto the farthest brings," to such

effect that none can be helped at another's cost or hurt. There is, in truth, a kind of impregnable oneness in humanity,—I call it impregnable because if we look at it it rises as a rampart before human society, fronting all the hosts of darkness,—the oneness that we are all members one of another, and that if one part suffer another suffers with it, as Paul said long ago, and that no human creature, or other creature with purpose in his acts or with power to feel, can be grown up to blessedness, or can be content and happy in the very smile of God, if therefrom be banished any one, the least or the worst. You know the old doctrine, that the beatific life in heaven will be the happier for hell, and the blest will give thanks for their salvation the more devoutly in view of the terrors which they escape. That doctrine is so monstrous a fact as hardly to be conceived, if history testified not to it so plainly. Strange, that any human creature could delight to imagine himself as a greedy buzzard, feeding on the body of another's woe, Now, it is in my doctrine of gratefulness that no creature but a monster could utter or feel a thanksgiving for himself in heaven, if once he entered there,—I can imagine he might think he could, in an unheavenly state of mind, before he attained the blessed realm; but once there he could not,—so long as there were a corner of hell left burning. Rather, like Whittier's Piero Lucca, one would say, "the world of pain were better, if therein one's heart might still be human, and desires of natural pity drop upon its fires some cooling tears."

So far then we go, following the idea of gratitude as justice; to this point, that there can be no gratefulness for an injustice or for any unfair advantage given, nay, nor even for any pain that we escape if thereby another feel it; that nothing unfair or unjust can be really a benefit; that an apparent privilege or advantage can be naught but a delusion, a snare and a fraud if it involve injustice to any one. Now, it is wonderful how clear all the ways of life and all the questions of men's deeds appear before this principle. Let a man but be filled with the thought of human oneness, so that he feels as quick in his heart a breach of this unity by any injustice, and detects it as instantly, as he would the violation of the organic oneness of his own body if it were torn, and in such a man you shall find eyes

wonderfully clear in sight, so that pretense and all false reasonings are pierced as with lances, and slain. All about us we hear Pilate's question, "What is truth?" There is another very deep question, and that is, "Who shall answer that question?"—I mean the question of Pilate. Not the selfish man; not he who receives aught without loving gratefulness; not the hermit, whose abode is dark caves of personal and sordid schemes; not the vain, the giddy, the careless; not the ambitious, the proud, vain and happy in their ambitions merely. In questions of the higher reason, it is more important what we *are* than with what skill or genius we think. Wherefore, I am never tired of saying that it is not the finely endowed, the talented, the strong, who shall see life as it is, but they who are round, like life, and deep and broad and sound. While the wrangle grows loud, and truth is said to be this or that, and arguments thicken that it lies here, lies there, in this motive, in this fact, or that equivocation or accommodation are in league with truth, or that silence always is right, no matter what the appearance be, or that one may deceive in love and war, and many debates to such-like purpose, flying like vampire bats around a cause that lies bleeding,—while this wrangling goes on, there comes a wise man of the ancients saying, "To speak the truth is to say what contains not the least harm to any one." Then how the air clears, how the fogs fly! Oh, what a definition that is! A saying comparable for spiritual insight to that of Jesus, "By this ye shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another." Both these sayings reach down to the unity of humanity, by which it exists as one body of many parts in vital union, so that nothing which is an injury to the least can be a truth or honor, or a privilege or an advantage, or aught but a pain, to the highest or the greatest.

O! friends, what wondrous fibres these are that are spun back and forth between us! I heard a good man and a poet say once that he could not conceive how he talked back and forth with any human fellow, except through God. What infinite length of web, invisible and dim, binds us all together!

What is the mystery of this spiritual coordination, this connection, by which all live or all die in one act, in one instant, through waves of force that go from soul to soul in circles and spread forever, these lines of influence that play all through



society like common nerves by which the pain or pleasure, the vice or virtue of each adds its quantum to the common weal or woe which all do feel, these ineffable wonders,—what is this but the image, I would rather say *the body*, of that Supreme Unity on which “the many” rest? All our issues are received into the bosom of God. Jesus says that the supreme mercy rains alike on the evil and the good, makes those gracious drops to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous alike. Ay; but those drops first ascended from the earth, they are our issues received into His bosom; and they come back as they went forth, *from* all of us, *upon* all of us, on the just and the unjust,—the combined drop which both the bad and the good here distilled and evaporated forth; and both must receive it again. Often I look at a little child with awe, to think how at those little feet,—so little, so helpless, so dear,—at those little feeble feet, a city, a continent, a world, focuses its rays. On the little head rain such hot vibrations and cool ones, such light rays, such dark ones. And alas! what part of them from me? Where go my words, my looks, nay, my very thoughts, desires, hopes, and whatever may be most hidden, which make motions in the brain that must fall somewhere, and start tides of waves to prattle or dash on a human body and soul? Oh bless, bless the *good* things that go on their way from us, as often they do,—God be thanked!—soft as angels’ wings who guide to will and to do! Blessed be the gratefulness, the loves, the unselfish sacrifices, the innocences and heroisms, that float like clouds in heaven and descend on babies’ heads like summer rain, first lifted up from us!

From all this, again, I gather, as to the objects or causes of gratefulness, that we must not give thanks by comparison. That is a sad and mean selfishness, and unfeelingness. It is not well to give thanks that we are not as others are, in danger, or in want, or in pain. The Pharisee’s thanksgiving, “Lord I thank thee that I am not as other men are,” seems to be condemned by the common agreement of mankind, as well as by the gentle Jesus. But if it be hardhearted or vulgar to feel spiritual exultation, to give thanks for greater virtue or piety or knowledge than falls to another’s lot, is it any better, tell me, to be thankful that we excell a neighbor in goods, possessions,

honor, house, lands, wealth, strength, power, pleasures, comforts? Let us not be complacent by comparison. I have read this fine saying somewhere, "I am sad when I find myself superior to any one." Is not that good? Truly, we ought all to understand the feeling of shame over triumph. I know not always how I *do* feel, but how I ought I know; and if I were conscious of a gulf or difference between me and any other, I know it ought to be less painful to me to be on the humble side of it; for it is inspiring to look up, but it is torture to look down. It is a great thing to gaze, far up the height, on some perfect saintliness above. How glorious it seems, how above all reach! Ay, but why? Because it is the law of that very height, of that character that stands thereon, that by a mirage in that high atmosphere, I, poor and imperfect, am lifted to that cloud-land, and the saint sees me only on the level of his eye.

Charles Sumner said he knew no other rule of right for a good nation, than that which is binding on a good man. He struck in that saying the key-note of morality, the key in which Time forever must compose its melodies. The saying is the more worthy and timely because what is allowed to be true and binding in near relations, often is held to be foolish or sentimental when distributed or enlarged. But I appeal to experiment. Never yet has it been thought to try whether the love that creates a home may not be potent to preserve a state; whether the tender justice, the forbearance, the helping hand, the endearment that cement friendship, may not also be the forces that can convert an enemy, or bring an alien to our arms. What! say you perhaps, what! scatter your heart about at the store as at the house? What! go sprinkling the byways with love that belongs at home, as if I were pouring myself out in spray from a watering-pot? Yea, truly, friend; and yet I counsel not anything inconsistent with a gentle and delicate reserve. There will be more love at home when there is more abroad, and never before. The only justification of my loving any one person, is that it is a little focussing of a great wide human love; for otherwise private affections are simply a miser's goods. A sense of fellowing with all mankind must lie at the bottom of any personal fellowship, however private and tender, if it is to be rescued from greediness. Will a man love mother or wife or sister nobly, think you, who cares not

whether other women go unsheltered, so his be housed well? By what name may we call the feeling of the father for his little son if the man go about every day blind and deaf to all the temptations that the dear sons of other men must meet in these flaunting streets? I perceive that it is a plain law of love that he who hates anything, or is unmoved by the claim of the whole, thereby is stopped by God from loving any one worthily, and his sentiment only reels and staggers like a drunkard about the little circle of his private indulgences.

But my text says, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good." "He is good." Notice, it says not, good *to us*; simply, "He is good." Gratefulness, as I have said, makes no comparisons. It is not more or less because fortune be more or less than once it was, or than another's is now. Gratefulness is not quickened because our plenty is very plain, and shines by contrast against some wider want or common poverty. Gratefulness inspires not thanks that we are not as other men are. It simply lifts up the spirit to acknowledge with joy the infinite goodness of God. The Hindoos have a saying that a benefit finds its only measure in the worth of those who have received it. It may be of more or less outward value, its real worth is measured by its reception,—whether ignobly and sordidly, or generously and humanely received. Says Lord Bacon, "If a man be thankful for small benefits, it shows that he weighs men's minds, and not their trash." All getting ourselves into a corner with our hearts and interests, the cutting off ourselves from the general import and body of humanity, this is not gratefulness, but ungratefulness. We may not give thanks because something is ours and not another's; this is not gratitude, but miserly chuckling. Samuel Johnson called patriotism "the last refuge of a scoundrel"—not because there is not a noble and humane love of country possible and glorious, but because a fierce and mean partisanship may cover a skulking selfishness at enmity with the race,

To speak thus is simply the expression of our great joy in the universe, the great joy we may feel in the benignant and blessed Power in which we are; a gladness and gratefulness oh! not, *no!* that God shows *us* favors, and covers *us* with blessings, but that he *is* Favor and Blessing, and Love and



Peace and Goodness everywhere; a sense of trust in that things are as they are; of adoration, simply, of infinite Goodness; of sympathy with the gladness of creatures, and tender desires toward those creatures, with joy when our desires appear beaming in their happiness. True gratefulness will not single out ourselves, but rather merge us in all beings, until we are filled with joy that there is so much joy, and that is all; of which joy our own is the least part and is most worthy in what it draws from our love of others. Not to give thanks that we are better off than others, but to make some others better off than they were, that is the impulse of the grateful soul—to improve the state of somebody, to add some drop of the oil of comfort or the wine of joy—a privilege, or some good thing, or a happiness bestowed.

Think of this a moment,—What is God but infinite Bestowal and the Joy of it? And there are abodes of little cheer, yes, sometimes I think of no cheer; there are such things—think of that—left for *our* spheres of bestowal. Some barren land may be converted into a land of milk and honey by us, *by us*. Think what happiness so may be shed about, and *what a thing happiness is!* Mrs. Jameson says it is as dignified and sacred a thing as morality; and it may be fruitful in a very lovely morality, being a constant encouragement and lifting, if it be taken gratefully. Then think, by this help of ours, what thanksgiving, that is, what forms of utterance of this grateful spirit, may go out like songs, like glad songs mingling with ours, yea, a part of our very own, concerted all together like melodies in a harmony, each lovely in itself, but loveliest with all others together—*by this help of ours*.



## AT PEACE WITH THINGS.

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“May this be a day of blessings to you — sweet content with what is.”

“Thanks to the human heart by which we live, thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears.” These words come to my mind on rising to speak to you, because I cannot look on you without emotions of wonder, of joy, of fear, of humility. Neither can I fail to gather much strength and hope from your faces, albeit I understand and feel deeply how pathetic and how humbling the fact is that people come to listen to the preacher week by week. And yet I have learned long ago that a friend may be scripture to us and speak scripture to us; yea, in the faces of some friends do I read scripture written in golden light, and in their words, their warnings, their tidings of affection, I find poems and scriptures as glorious as the songs of the morning stars. To-day I will take even a text from a friend’s mouth, as from Scripture. One wrote to me not long ago, “May this be a day of blessings to you—sweet content with what is.” I paused with reverence over the benediction. It were enough if it had been “May this be a day of blessings to you.” Then would have come trooping to my mind all the possible blessings of a day, which, as old George Herbert said, “hang in clusters, they come trooping upon us, they break forth like mighty waters on every side.” I should have thought, mayhap, of the things that make a day happy, of what we call successes or pleasures. But there followed these words instantly, “*sweet content with what is,*” as the sum of a day of blessings. This indeed contained so deep and so blissful a thought, that I could not but follow it, and found it scripture to my soul. In the spirit of this saying I shall speak to you to-day of being at peace with things; and I shall aim to give you reasons why we should be at peace with things,

for I find myself greatly helped by seeing the reason for any good action or right spirit, and the unreasonableness of the opposites of them. For though I may answer correctly when good precepts are urged on me, or when they seem to cry aloud to me, in this general way, I find often that this is no sure armor when the combat comes and the strife has me in its grasp, but is lost in the exigency or emotion. The precept comes not to hand to help me at this critical point, because it has not become a part of thought, a part of *thought* I say, but is only my own unheeding assent to a common currency of sentiment. Thus, it is easy to say we ought to be at peace with things; but when the trouble presses, what then? what becomes of the saying? The mere precept falls out of sight; it avails not, because we have not made it the substance of our thinking, so as to see how reasonable it is, and how unreasonable not to be peace with things. The world is full of the discords and the troubles, the complaints, the sighs which come of not having wrought this peace into the fibres of our thoughts. The poor continually are sighing for the middle estate, so that a great deal of strength and time goes into sighing which should go into earning. And the middle estate envies the power of the very rich, and feels as poor as the poorest. And the very rich, what are they doing meantime, but longing and sighing and often groaning with the cares, which their easy but not wealthy neighbors never feel, yet seem to cry aloud to suffer. Therefore it is wise and useful to give a principle which may become thought within us, and show us *why it is so reasonable* to be at peace with things.

Now I have observed this,—I say it is a matter of observation,—that when we are not at peace with things, but at war, we are going about not looking at the whole of our lot, but only at some things in it; and these things we compare enviously with some things in the lots of others. But consider how unreasonable this is. Against which unreasonableness, this is the principle I offer, namely, that we must take our lot as a whole; and so taken, we never would exchange it for any other, because always we shall find some one thing at least too precious to be parted with. And if we have some one thing so precious that we would not part with it for anything, what is that but having our lot very precious indeed therewith? Is it not foolish to

think of taking the best things out of many lots, one thing out of this condition, another out of that situation, and so, keeping all our own delights too, thereupon grumbling because we cannot have this artificial compound made up by us as a workmen mixes stuffs? We must take our lot as it comes to us. And how comes it to us? Emerging from the multitude of conditions around us and far back of us, which are divine. From these it emerges holy, God-made. And would we change it for any other? No, because we have something in it that we would not give up. Then if it be unnatural to make a human lot by striving to piece together the best things out of all other lots about us, and if it be natural and reasonable to take our lot all as one thing, as it comes forth from God's hand, and if, so taken, we would not change it for any other, why, then how foolish and childish it is to grumble at this lot, which, nevertheless, we would not part with if we could.

Every one of us can think easily of things he would not part with for all other things of the great rich earth put together. It may be a wife or husband, whose daily strength and cheer compass us, and take up, as in a skilled and strong hand, the very hardness of some of our conditions, like a flint, whereon then with their hearts they strike sparks forth, which either light the darkness or kindle a fire whereat we may warm ourselves. It may be some precious companionship of mind or heart or soul, which may pack every day with rich experiences, with knowledge of life, because life abounds so in that union, with glowing thoughts or radiant expression; and these things freight memory for a life-voyage with great sustenance, and we never can be hungry unto utter pain or weakness. Or it may be perhaps dear children, whose daily sweetness nobody knows but us, the daily observers. And how precious and lovely it is to be daily observers of these little lives that are ours to cherish, the precious first-born to young parents mayhap, or the lovely last-born to the old, or the group of midway younglings who fill your house with a gaiety which is like birds in a grove, in whose music your own springtime comes again, better even than it was in your own early years. Or the son whose manly worth is a proud joy to you; or the daughter whose grace is like willows over graves, so beautiful and such message of comfort it is! Or it

may be a brother or sister or father or mother, or friend. Nay, it may be but the work you are doing day by day, doing nobly, doing secretly mayhap; and all the more wondrous comfort and preciousness may lie in it if it be known only to a few who thank us for it with all their souls. Nay, it may not even be any of these things, but only a memory of them all, or of some of them; that kind of memory in which a delicious companionship we once had is immortal; memories of little men-children or women-children who slid off our breasts, too narrow for them, to the wide earth and the heavens, but off of our breasts deep as those heavens with memory and love. Nay, I can conceive of a look, of an expression on some face, when it is not known we are observing it, of a hand-touch, of a depth in the eyes, which, having once had or seen we would not exchange for "the wealth of seas and the spoils of war." Now if every one can think easily of such-like things in his lot, mayhap of some one thing only which he would not part with for all other things together, think for an instant what a fact that is! Is it not a thing of deep moment, of wonder, of divinity, that every one has something he would not exchange for all other things? Surely this is something to fasten on. So long as the mind dwells on this, there will be no moment for repining. And is it not reasonable, I say, to dwell most and longest on that possession which is worth more than all the world to us, which we would not think of bartering for all the best things together that all the other persons have? Surely this is very reasonable, as it is also very simple. And yet it is the secret of the happy and grateful spirit which is at peace with things.

This oneness of our lot, whereby it must be taken all parts together as a unit, is a fact that reaches far back into past generations, nay, into a past which sinks in itself until it is lost and even Time seems gone. We could not change one portion of our lot, and leave another as it is, without altering conditions back into so shadowy a realm that truly we should know not where we were,—without changing the order of things. "It takes all mankind to make a man," a poet says, "and each man when he dies takes a whole earth away with him." When the child in your arms smiles, the little flexible mouth and the eyelids, the dimpled cheeks, move just as they do, and not



otherwise, by causes which run back out of sight until they are lost in God; and when two little children smile, the expressions are as different as the past conditions from which they have come so mysteriously. Away, far beyond all reckoning and all imaginings, you began to be made. In what did you begin? What was the first forecast of you? Truly, when I ask this question I am led much more to wonder whether I began at all. What kind of creatures, plants, passions, thoughts, then flourished on this earth, when, if ever, I began, when the something that was to bloom in me took its beatific life? Nay, where indeed was the earth perhaps? You must have begun in it in some way when it was yet "without form and void." Something there was which was the prediction of you. What forms and progressions led to you, what myriads of conspiring atoms worked together when your features began to be foretold far back? And a like multitude of forces and atoms toiled together through aeons of ages to the making of all other persons who came near to any one of the long line of human beings from whom you have come, or any other person who has touched your own life in the present. All sprung out of that same unfathomable depth, and all have joined together to make your lot what it is. I wonder not that John Weiss said that the most religious thing in the universe is any *fact* whatever. Thus we are obliged to look at our lot as one whole, because such an infinity of causes has worked together to make it; yea, an infinity of causes has worked on every little part of it, and the simplest thing in our lot would be a little different if even one of this multitude had been absent or had been changed. Now to look so at our lot as a whole, what is it but to regard it as we do any natural product, a flower, a tree, a mountain? We may find some flaw in each of these if we look with an eye seeking flaws, which is a very bad kind of an eye; we may see flaws in any natural thing, I say, whereby it falls short of the ideal of its shape or structure. But we look at the object all as one, and call it beautiful and grand, and take it thankfully, knowing that the conditions which have turned its parts this way or that way are immeasurable and hidden in Nature's store-house, which is the same as to say in the bosom of the life of God. In a like way we must think of our lot as a natural product, whose conditions and formation we cannot

fathom. And if we find it, thus taken all as one, too precious to be exchanged, it is foolish and ungrateful and impious to complain of a lot which we would not barter if we could for any other that ever we have seen; and, if we look, it seems to be like a feature in the countenance of God.

"Gentle pilgrim, if thou know  
The garment old of Pan,  
And how the hills began,  
The frank blessings of the hill  
Fall on thee—as fall they will."

Now when nature thus has laid out our fate and lot, prepared during countless ages of the workings of countless forces, then we see at once that our own will comes into play. It makes a great difference how we act on the circumstances which this far-working Providence has brought around us. Let us look at this.

We see in our lot bright things and dark things. The dark things are those which we shall complain of unless we take thought to be reasonable. The bright things include those which are too precious to allow the thought of exchanging them. What shall we do if we be wise and reasonable? How shall we act on this lot of ours? My answer is,—We shall be careful to look mainly at the brightness, at the bright things. If we do that, we shall get a great supply of light by which we can see our way in the world. It is very strange that we who need a lamp for our feet through all the wondrous, strange, complex ways of life, nevertheless put away the bright things which will shed light for us, and look at the dark things. And still more, if we look at bright things they give understanding how to look reasonably and patiently on the darker things; for not only have these bright things a light to show us how to walk our path, but they show us the dark things in that path in such a way that we can understand better why they shine not, and the light leads to comprehension of the shadows. Especially we should look long and lovingly on those bright things which are so precious and dear as to be prized above all possessions and wealth, dearer to us than all other things together. Why should we look for the bad when the good is by us? And why look most on aught but the best? If we have a



picture in which a rare genius and rich knowledge of life have joined feeling and fancy, shall we be blind to this because some parts are out in the drawing? Once I stood looking, rapt, at a marvelous piece of sculpture, as it seemed to me, an old man, who looked out wonderingly, with the simple pathos of wonder, into a great distance, which seemed to have become a distance and marvel to him while he was asleep,—familiar and close at hand before. There was to my mind an exquisite tenderness, patience, pathos and wonder in the old face, in the raised hand, in all the attitude, at once so feeble and yet so strong. And as I stood admiring it, a friend at my side said, having been speechless all the time before, “Don’t you think that fore-arm is a little too long?” I confess my heart sank within me a little, for I would fain not have had my own attention directed to bad, when good was by me so beautifully. If we have a gem of gleaming lustre, shall we fill our eyes with flaws in it? If there are dear faces in which souls shine, in which life’s central mysteries send waves of feeling back and forth twixt the heart and the margins, the mouth, the eyes, who will stop before such beauty to pick out a mole in the features? Even so it is wise to look at our fortunes, holding our eyes on the inestimable things, which no one could buy from us with all the wealth of worlds; for thus we shall keep at peace with all things among which are such precious things.

But again, I say the dark things in our lot either are in our power or are not in our power. It is familiar to you, from my long preaching to you, that I draw a great deal of help from the old distinction of the Stoics, that all things are of two classes, the things which are in our power and the things which are not in our power. Now the dark things are either in our power or not, that is, if they continue to exist, or if they remain dark, it is either our own fault, or else it is beyond our power. Well, if the things we complain of are in our power, then is it not foolish to repine? For we have simply to change and cure them, being powerful over them. Before we complain indeed, it will be well to ask very closely whether the evils be not in our power to be cured, and come not by our own fault; for we shall be surprised at the many ills which prove to be of our own making if we study them well. Many persons go through life complain-

ing of troubles which are but their own ignorance or idleness or envy or wastefulness or ill manners, or ingratitude or heedlessness, transformed to plague them, like flies breeding in decay; and they will not clear away the breeding heaps. There are hopeless ills, I know (I think I hear some of you saying this to me),—there are ills which once done *cannot* be healed. Yes, they are sad ills, the most woful kind—wreck and ruin of the heart. But these evils always give us warnings before they fall on us. Nature never yet broke her pact with any soul, no, nor in these woful things ever took a heart by surprise; nay, she is prodigal of warnings. Nature sends troops of heralds to tell us of the danger first; but the dread last time, the once-too-often of our selfishness or blindness, shuts the record forever. And if by anger or malice or selfishness or neglect we have turned these evils loose to settle on us, how complain we then if they last forever? If you turn love adrift, for example, into storms, to bear what may be, while you sit and nurse yourself in ease, will you murmur then if love freeze, or die hunger-smitten by the wayside, and is dead? If you seek not, or half seek an end, will you sit down childishly and cry because you gain it not? If you have wasted years in riot or in idleness, can you complain, like a whining school-boy, because time will not move backward to make good your truancy? If you have leaped recklessly, or been fool-hardy, will you whimper that you picked not the fruit of wisdom and painstaking? If you have cast away chances by misbehavior, what a thing it is to grumble because the opportunity comes not your way again. Yet the world is full of weak wailings for good things, whose price nevertheless the one who wails simply will not pay, and of complaints at ills whose conditions he who complains makes for himself.

Thus much of the dark things that are in our power. But now, if the dark things in our lot be not in our power, and not our own fault, then it is our part to bear them nobly; and there is no greater nobility than patient and noble enduring. When a trouble cannot be removed, then there is a high way of taking it up, as it were, in our hands and laying it right on our hearts, and pressing it there hard without murmuring. This is the field both of kindness and of religion. It is the field of kindness, for there are many ills in life that, not being our own fault, befall us by

the fault of others. What shall we do with these? Well, we must take them in a kind, forbearing, forgiving, merciful way. Oh I know I am preaching a hard doctrine; but it is heaven's doctrine, it is truth, it is ideal, it is divine living. To murmur savagely, to complain churlishly, is revengeful, and to whimper pettishly is ignoble. "Let us beware," said an old Stoic, "of feeling towards the cruel as they feel towards others," taking any evil in a way that may be as harsh as the injury and more gross. If we are loaded with ills by another's act, let us not burden ourselves more by ill taking of the ill. Nay, I have thought sometimes that there is no great ill, except the bad way in which we take the ill. For, remember this,—if we cannot teach another what is right, or make him wiser than to harm us, that is a good reason for being very meek in ourselves, as a wise Stoic said; and if we cannot cure the ill, there is left the dignity of bearing it quietly; and that is a decoration by God.

And this, again, is the field of religion. For if the ills of our lot are not in our power, and are not the fault of others, then they belong in the order of that mysterious and holy providence which has prepared our way and cleft a path for us, running back far beyond our sight, and forward, and all along the way within his holy counsel. In this we stand on the edge of the solemn, mighty, infinite Law and Order. We cannot tell where the facts of our lot were wrought on the star-forges of the heavens, "what anvils rang, what hammers beat" to shape our destiny; we know not how the holy past in which God worked in his perfection prepared the way for us through myriads of ages, nor can we see how we, held as in the hollow of a hand by that same order, that same infinite mercy, are preparing for others to come. Nay, I said we cannot see how God worked in his perfection; but we cannot see even that there is perfection, for the sweep of view that reveals Divinity is as hard to us, as to see all around a sphere. But we can see that there is blessedness and beauty, we can behold order reigning; even though we have to look through immense reaches of space, and over vast aeons of time to see this order, because it is too grand to be seen in the little events at our feet, which nevertheless are in it. Still, so looking, we *do* see it, a sight of glory and of rapture; and the heavens lying in the lap of it. It has no "shadow of turning,"

no changeableness, no unrest, no shifting, veering, nor swerving, nor shuffling, no pause, no stop, no truce. It is never sorry for anything done, nor in haste to do aught. It is the same Almighty Life, Thought and Power forever and ever and ever, in the beginning, now, and worlds without end. We can see the hands thereof moving in the infinite heavens, we can *not* behold that hand reaching down to pick up the least part of our life and send it going in an order as infinite and heavenly as the starry spaces. Yet so it does. Our joys that hand takes up and sets them in the heavens, if we will but look, if we will but know the hand and know that it takes up our joys into the heavens, where they are like stars shining, beautiful, celestial. And our woes too that hand takes up, our sorrows, our struggles, our failures and our sins, that we may repent and strive again, our losses and our disappointments (and how terrible those may be when we have set our hope very high and very precious), our long toils that seem so unrewarded and never are unrewarded, our daily utter weariness perhaps, when night comes, with our terrible toil. And all the turmoil and wrong and outrage, and faithfulness and desertion and greed and robbery and hardness of heart, all these too that hand takes up; for the power of God is like the atmosphere or the sea, that takes all the earth's smoke and waste, and is not stained. If we see and feel and know of that hand, then we shall gain a new power—

“The insanity of towns to stem,  
With simpleness for stratagem.”

We have but to remember that this whole order is God's thinking. In it the heavens swim, and in the heavens the earth sails, and on the earth we are. We therefore are of the earth, which is of the heavens, which are of God's thinking; and in his life and power, then, is our lot held and made. Whatever it be therefore, in the sorrow and pains that are not in our power, let us recall that it floats in the thinking of God, and tread solemnly and piously. To be at peace with things thus, is to be at peace with God.

Therefore let us, who may be scriptures unto each other, beware how we live in this matter, and how we speak. If we have a friend who needs aid and counsel, write not to him that you pray that he be delivered and that the cup pass him by; nay,

but say, "Brother, like the Jews of old who always prayed with their faces toward Jerusalem, I turn myself towards thee now and beseech that strength be given thee, strength, knowledge and courage to say and do the right, which shall make thee at peace with things. I ask not to have thy burden lifted, but for strength and light to see that it is well, and for courage to bear bravely and cheerfully. Oh my brother, I would not dare petition to have burdens taken away. We know not the workings of the Infinite; we are not able to tell the future; even the events of a moment we cannot forecast. How foolish and undevout it is, then, to fret and to be anxious. Let us have faith. I bid thee be of good courage and cheer!" And for ourselves, let us not hedge the influence and import of our wills by murmurs, complaints and moans against the whole order of living things (and all things are living things), nor mutter and sigh and make outcry about things not in our power, but in the Almighty Keeping of God.

Thus I have tried to show the reasonableness of being at peace with things:

Because we should take our lot as one thing, just as the infinite of God brings it to us.

Because so taken we never shall wish to exchange it, since it holds some things too precious to be parted with.

Because we ought to look long and gratefully at these precious things if they are worth more to us than all other things together, until we get light from them to show us our way.

Because many of the ills are our own fault, and we should cure them and not groan about them.

Because of the ills not our own fault, and not in our power, some are made by other persons, and these we are to take with a forbearance like unto God's mercy; and some are inwoven with the unchangeable order of God's laws, and these we are to take with piety, looking up unto his Infinity of Power and his Eternity of Love.





## YAHWEH IN THE BIBLE.

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This morning I shall speak to you of Yahweh in the Bible. Yahweh is the same as Jehovah, but is the more correct pronunciation. Nevertheless we cannot be sure that this is the true sound of it, as it was spoken by the Hebrews of old. The sound of that holy name was forgotten by the Hebrews because it was held by them so holy that it might not be spoken without sacrilege. According to the Rabbinical tradition, it might be spoken but once in the year, and then by only one man in the nation, namely, the High Priest when he entered annually into the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Beyond this it could never be spoken; and that tradition has come down so unbroken among the Jews that in their synagogues to-day, in their reading of the Scriptures, they put another word in the place of Yahweh when they come to that name in the text. Now perhaps this may be a superstition; I will not say it is not. Indeed, I know that the human spirit in sincerity is free of the whole universe, to use and to speak what it will. And yet that old superstition had a high and holy beauty about it, in my mind. It is in the spirit of the words of Sir Thomas Browne, which always pleased me; he says, "I confess I am naturally inclined to that which misguided zeal terms superstition. My conversation I do acknowledge austere, my behavior full of rigor, sometimes not without morosity; yet at my devotion I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat and my hand, with all the outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible devotion." "I should violate mine own arm," he says, "rather than a church, and I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell without an elevation." I like that tender and delicate spirit of devotion which thus takes up with soft and reverent touch all that belongs to things sacred and

religious. The quick, harsh, sudden and familiar use of sacred names seems to me unreligious, even irreligious, and very sad.

I like not those, nor do I think much of their piety, on whose lips the Sacred Name is taken oftenest and most easily; and when it is taken, I like the custom of that reverent and holy man who never could say the name of God without a little pause, and a hush and lowering of the tone. We speak of the whispers of love; why not also the softened tone, the whisper, the reverent utterance and the hush of simple and pure religious feeling? Quiet is in itself so holy and so lovely that it belongs in holy places, and with sacred and religious names. "A wide quiet," saith a poet, very beautifully, "A wide quiet on the hilltops falling," and the same singer speaking of his presence on a hill, by hills surrounded and lifted high up into the blue of a summer sky, says:

"Nighed in the mighty minster we,  
Beneath the dome of radiant blue:  
Cathedral-hush on every side,  
And worship breathing through.

The Silence, awful living word,  
Behind all sound, behind all thought,  
Whose speech is Nature-yet-to-be,  
The Poem yet unwrought."

Thus would I that quiet and holy silence and hush of voice should invest sacred names and thoughts. Parker says it is beautiful to have a pious mind, and sometimes to speak therefrom, and the love of God, he says, may cover over all our lives with simple beauty and joy; but "unhappy is the man or woman who tattles thereof, foaming at the mouth in some noisy conference, as in a village cur barks to cur; but blessed is he whose noiseless piety sweetens his daily toil, filling the house with the odor of that ointment." Epictetus advises thus, "Think of God oftener than you breathe." Ah yes, think of him in everything, in thine awaking, in thy fresh strength in the morning, at thy morning meal and thy morning labor, and thy noon-day rest; and when the night descends with its quiet, and its sentinels of stars watching the holy peace, then think of him; and when thou liest down to sleep and art not afraid, think of him. In the rain-drop, in the bird's music, in the glorious light of day, in the march of the orbs of the heavens, think of him. Think of him



in thy friendships and thy loves, in thy home circles; in the dignity of thy daily toils too, and under the sweet refreshing quality of thy fatigue which laps thee in holy slumber, think of him. Think of him, ah yes! But *that* is the emphasis,—*Think* of him. Speak not of him. If Epictetus had said, Speak of God oftener than you breathe, surely we should have felt no religion therein, and nothing like to the grand, old, patient slave-philosopher, no, but some profaneness and impiety. Therefore I say it was a high and holy superstition, if you call it such, which kept the holy name among the Jews from being taken into their mouths familiarly and commonly.

If we wish to gain some idea of what Yahweh was to the old Hebrew race, we must try to get a glimpse of the times before Moses. There we shall find that the ancient Yahweh was without doubt a Nature-god, as in the primitive beginnings of religion all the greatest deities are. For man naturally personifies first those things which most strike his senses; and that which first does that office for him is light and darkness, the glory of the sun which daily is swallowed up in the night, and again comes forth in the morning; so that the great deities which began religion were Nature-gods, and almost always either sun-gods, that is personifications of the sun's power and light, or else heaven-gods, that is rulers over the atmosphere and the clouds; and sometimes the two were joined together; and this was probably the case with Yahweh. Now, wherever you find a Nature-god you will find, first, that the deity is unmoral, I say not immoral, but unmoral; because the sun shines, the morning rises, the night descends, the rain falls, on the good and bad alike, without distinction. Nature makes no moral separations. Wherefore the Nature-gods show their favors and give their benign offices to those that serve them, but without regard at first to the moral condition of those that serve. So it was with Yahweh, as we may find traces in the Bible itself; as, for example in the fraud by which Jacob obtained the birthright of his brother, a fraud nevertheless which is smiled on by Yahweh when once the patriarch's word and faith are pledged to it.<sup>1</sup> Nature-gods, again, are either pleasure-loving deities, whom you will find most where nature is soft and benign

1. Gen. XXVII, XXVIII.

and the earth easily yields her increase ; or they are stern, austere, and terrible deities, as you will find most where the country is fierce and wild, and storms abound and the soil is rocky. This was the character of Yahweh. He was a god belonging far back in the Armenian hills whence the Hebrew race came. He was a stern, merciless, austere and terrible deity, delighting in human sacrifice, as the Bible plainly shows. It was ordained among the Hebrews that the first-born of every creature, man included, should be devoted and sacrificed to Yahweh in commemoration of the exodus from Egypt;<sup>1</sup> and it is probable that sometimes this dreadful doom was carried out literally, before, and even perhaps after, it became lawful to substitute a payment in money for the sacrifice of the first born of men. We see too in the stories of Abraham,<sup>2</sup> and of Jephthah's<sup>3</sup> daughter, that the notion of human sacrifice by no means was foreign to the Hebrew thought. Such then was the Yahweh of the tribes in Goshen. He was perhaps a tribal god, worshiped by only one of the tribes, or perhaps he was worshiped by all of them, this common worship giving them perhaps a certain loose unity and nationality in their life in Goshen. Into this condition of things came the colossal influence of Moses. The great religious work of Moses was two-fold. First, he chose a god for all Israel and proclaimed that he alone should be worshiped, that he only was Israel's deity ; and Moses chose for that god not any pleasure-loving divinity, or any less grand deity than the austere, mighty and terrible Yahweh. The second part of Moses' religious work was to invest that choice with moral conceptions, as he did by the ten Words or Commandments, which we may suppose date back to Moses more surely and competely than any other part of the early books of the Bible. Thus it was Moses' great glory that not only he chose a grand and austere and terrible deity, and not a pleasure-loving one, for his people, but he joined religion with life, and made piety to depend on right conduct and good living.

We cannot honor to highly such a great work as that at that early date. Indeed we must admit there are traces that the work could not be completed at once, and we cannot be sure just how

1. Exod, XIII, 11—15 : XXII, 29—30.

2. Gen. XXII.                      3. Judges XI, 30—40

much of this lofty and pure conception lay unclouded and clear in Moses' own mind. For example, we find the narrative that when Yahweh looked down from the mountain, and beheld the people worshiping the golden calf, he fell into a great fit of wrath, and told Moses he would destroy all that rebellious race of people and build up a new race from Moses himself. And Moses then besought him not to do so, using a very strange argument, one would think, to address to a holy and grand deity; his plea is, If the Lord destroy his people that he has brought from the land of Egypt, the Egyptians will mock at the Lord, and say, Behold for evil he took them out from the land of Egypt, to slay them in the mountains and consume them from the face of the earth.<sup>1</sup> And again it is related that Moses wished to see the face of God, and God told him that his face could not be seen by any one without death to him; but he said, I will set you in a cleft of the rock, and then I will pass by, and as I pass by I will put my hand over your eyes to shield you from beholding my face which would be death to you, and when I have passed by, then you may look forth and see my back as I go on.<sup>2</sup> Thus we behold ascribed even to Moses and his time these inferior conceptions of the nature of Yahweh. Yet Moses' choice, and his association with it of moral conceptions, was a strong seed which grew and prospered and developed in a spiritual direction. From which it followed that there began a struggle between the people on one side, who remained for generations on generations sunk in the lower conceptions, and the prophets on the other, who laid hold on the spirituality of the religion which Moses planted, and followed it to the heights. Let us then look for a moment at the conception of Yahweh among the people alone, then at the conception which the people held with the prophets in one, and then at the conception which the prophets held all alone, beyond and above the people.

The Hebrew people held sensuous conceptions of Yahweh. They made images of him, or at least images symbolical to them, notwithstanding the prohibition in their law. They had at one time in their history, the image of a bull, worshiped at different places in Palestine, associated, no doubt, with thoughts of Yahweh.

1. Exod. XXXII, 7—14.

2. Exod. XXXIII, 20—23.

They always conducted their worship in a sensuous manner, by external sacrificial rites. They held the idea that by sacrificing to Yahweh they could propitiate him, and that he was pleased with the smell of sacrifice and incense. They believed that in some shape he lived on the Ark between the Cherubim of that mysterious structure, so that they felt strong wherever they could carry the Ark with them; and when it was taken by the enemy, all courage deserted them.<sup>1</sup> The people also believed that Yahweh was one of many gods. For hundreds of years the prophets were warring with the people against their worship of other gods. The people bowed to the gods of the nations round about them; they thought that Yahweh indeed was the greatest and grandest of deities, but still that others were worthy of their adoration, and must be appeased.

The ideas which the people and the prophets held together were these: Yahweh was thought to be Israel's God in particular; he loved Israel; he had chosen that people, and cared nothing for the other nations of the earth,—indeed he was a foe of all other nations; but Israel he would nurse and bring to great glory, because they were his own chosen people, and he was their God. Also, the prophets and people together conceived of Yahweh as having a local habitation and abiding place. Indeed, he could not be worshiped, according to their conception, outside of Palestine, because he was not there to be worshiped, only living with his chosen people in the places where they were. Hence it was a terrible thing among the ancient Hebrews to be banished from their land or country, because they were banished also from their God; he could not be found in the strange and foreign countries they were driven to.<sup>2</sup> They also conceived that this local habitation was in the crystal heavens over the holy land which they occupied, and that there Yahweh dwelt and was the Yahweh of Hosts, which means the ruler of hosts of angels or messengers by which he executed his will on the earth, and also the ruler of the stars; for in the Hebrews' conception the stars were associated in some way with the angels, and the Yahweh of Hosts meant the Yahweh of the heavenly bodies and the angelic armies.

Now we come to the more glorious conception which the prophets held alone, to which the people had not risen. Chief

1. 1 Samuel IV.

2. 1 Samuel XXVI, 19.

and greatest among these was their view of the holiness of Yahweh. He was separated by his unimagined and inexpressible purity from all creation. He lived apart from it and above it, was not in any way mingled with it, was too pure to be in it. He was inexpressibly exalted and holy, beyond all human conception, in the minds of the prophets. There are many passages of Scripture in the prophetic literature, expressing this very nobly: Isaiah says,

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.  
The whole earth is full of his glory,”

and in another place he calls Yahweh “the holy one of Israel.” Amos says: (v, 21–23,)

“I hate, I despise your feasts;  
I have no delight in your solemn assemblies.  
When ye offer me burnt offerings and flour-offerings,  
I will not accept them,  
And upon the thank-offerings of your fatlings I will not look.  
Take ye away from me the noise of your songs,  
And the music of your harps let me not hear;  
Let justice flow forth as waters,  
And righteousness as a mighty stream!”

That is to say, I will take no delight in the odour of your sacrifices and incense. For it was a part of this holiness of Yahweh in the minds of the prophets that he cared not for external worship, but for the inward state of the heart, and that all sacrifice and ceremony were to him as naught. What he desired was the inward worship of right conduct. This was a sublime conception which the people had not reached. Hosea says, (vi, 6.)

“I desire mercy and not sacrifice,  
The knowledge of God more than burnt offerings;”  
and again Isaiah (i, 11–17,)

“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Yahweh.  
I am satiated with burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of the fed beasts;  
In the blood of bullocks and of lambs and of goats I have no delight.



When ye come to appear before me,  
 Who hath required this of you, to tread my courts?  
 Bring no more false oblations!  
 Incense is an abomination to me,  
 The new moon also and the sabbath and the calling of  
 the assembly;  
 Iniquity and festivals I cannot endure.  
 Your new moons and your feasts my soul hateth;  
 They are a burden to me;  
 I am weary of bearing them.  
 When ye spread forth your hands,  
 I will hide mine eyes from you;  
 Yea, when ye multiply prayers, I will not hear;  
 Your hands are full of blood!  
 Wash you; make you clean;  
 Put away your evil doings from before mine eyes;  
 Cease to do evil;  
 Learn to do well;  
 Seek justice; relieve the oppressed;  
 Defend the fatherless; plead for the widow!"  
 And again, those noble words from Micah, (vi, 6-8,)

"Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh,  
 And bow myself before the most high God?  
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,  
 With calves of a year old?  
 Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams,  
 Or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?  
 Shall I give my first-born for the sin of my soul,  
 The fruit of my body for my transgression?"

You will notice here that even in the times of Micah this thought of the possibility of human sacrifice was still so well known to the people that the prophet might mention it without fear of being misunderstood. Then says Micah, answering his question gloriously,

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;  
 What doth Yahweh require of thee,  
 But to do justly and to love mercy,  
 And to walk humbly before thy God?"

This was a high, glorious and holy conception of Yahweh in the

minds of the prophets. They also considered him the only creator of all nature, and of all mankind. Nothing was made that was not made by Yahweh. They spoke of him also as the one supreme ruler, lawgiver and power of the earth; and among all the nations, not only over his chosen people, but over all other nations too, did he reign, according to the prophets, and would yet bring them to the holy city and to his own foot-stool in the enjoyment of the glory of the one God of Israel. That was the prophetic dream. Yahweh, too, in the minds of the prophets, was the giver of every blessing; no good thing but came from his hands. Also he was the giver of all calamities and evils. Amos says very plainly, "Shall evil be done in the city, and the Lord not do it?" But not only so; Yahweh also created and enforced *moral* evils. It was the Lord who hardened the heart of Pharaoh to prevent his people from going, that thus the Lord's wonders might be worked and the king punished.<sup>1</sup> Not only so, but he is represented by the prophets as hardening the hearts of his own people,<sup>2</sup> the Israelites, that he may show his glory and holiness by punishment of the wicked, before at last he brings all the chosen nation back to his mercy. Yahweh was the head of a moral government of the world, which he administered by penalties, that is, by natural and historical calamities, failures in war, loss of battles, subjugation by foreign peoples, storms, earth-quakes. Events of this kind were considered Yahweh's punishments for guilt. We look on such things now in a better and higher way. It is very hard for us to understand how religious people could conceive of their deity as deliberately hardening the hearts of his people in order that he might punish them for that same hardening of the heart. But we are dealing, we must remember, with people that never reasoned, never philosophized, were merely worshipers, primitive worshipers too at this time, full of their thoughts of wonders, signs and miracles. It has been always the genius of the Semitic peoples, the Hebrews, the Arabs and other like races, to conceive of their deities as outside of nature, making it, and ruling it from outside. Wherever that conception exists, it will be found to go with the notion of miraculous interference, of ruling by means of arbitrary penalties, sent in the shape of convul-

1. Exod, VII, 3.

2. Is, LXIII, 17.

sions of nature or historical calamities. But we conceive of God not as out of nature, but as in nature, living in nature; I would rather say indeed *living nature*, living it forth. He *is* nature. I might speak of Nature as the visibility, the audibility, the tangibility of God. And when we have that thought of him, not anywhere far off, always in all that he has made, or I would rather say all that he is now making or appearing, then we come into the realm of beautiful and glorious and living order, and all these strange ancient conceptions fly away like morning mists. Then we find order reigning from the least little atom to the most gigantic globe, in all the external domain of nature; and the little dew drop takes on its semi-globular shape on the leaf, and the rain drop falls in its fiery sphere, by the same laws that govern the revolution of the earth and the motions of the planets. And the same order rules in the moral sphere, whether it be in the small angers of the little child with which we wrestle in the nursery, or the uprisings of a city, or the gigantic clamors and wars and frantic wraths of a people, or the great struggles and moral turmoils, the crimes, the cruelties, of the whole earth. It is one law, one method, one nature that runs through all, and they are all taken up into the uttermost purposes of the same power of God. And the same order runs through all our joys. It is the same thing when the little child prattles and smiles in infantile gaiety, and when we with our larger knowledge experience the joys of love, of friendship, of thought, even of mere healthy living, of glorious animal existence—the same thing through all, and up to the beatific songs of the seraphs; it is the same glory, the same God-like fact, and all included in the one marvel of order, “the stream of tendency.” Then, with this conception we take the last great step; we learn that law and love are one, are the same, “named with the Everlasting Name.”

Another point of the noble way in which the prophets regarded Yahweh was his unity. The prophets were monotheists strictly. They worshiped no other deity whatever. They were always struggling with the idolatries of the people, always proclaiming that there was but one God, and that one was Yahweh. The Hebrew prophets continually are saying in their own language that which is the noble utterance of the Koran, “There is no God but God.” I call that a very noble utterance. It runs all



through the Arabian religion, "There is no God but God." I must pause a moment to think of the ethical significance and moral power of that saying. For a man must be conceived as worshiping that which he believes in. That is the true object of his worship; not anything he *names* deity, but what truly he believes and trusts in. So it is for the health of a man if truly and constantly he says, "There is no God but God;" very great strength and help is in it. When tempests or gusts of passion, immoderate desires, raging appetites, vagrant feelings, sway us, then we shall be stayed, and be able to rule ourselves, and have the glory that we are obeyed by ourselves, if we can say strongly, in the midst of tempests and gusts, "There is no God but God." We shall not bow then to our passions or appetites. Or if we be led by ambitions to rise higher in power, to rule over men, to have great fame, and perhaps we tremble on the verge of sacrificing our manly honor, our strict principles, our noblest sense of perfect pure integrity, to gain that high gleaming prize, then it will be well if we ask ourselves what truly we are worshiping, and say with the Arabs, "There is no God but God." Or if we are pursuing any more ignoble things, the pleasures and comforts which riches give, or the ease and luxury which our neighbors' ostentations show, we shall do well to pause and think what we may be worshiping—a golden idol, no less an idol because it is golden—and say with the Koran scriptures, "There is no God but God. Yes, if we be devotees too, if we think we have within us the light of true religion, and yet really we be pursuing the glories of heaven, the joys of the world to come, or we be trying to escape the pains of hell, it will be well for us to ask ourselves whether we be truly worshiping God, or not rather bowing down to our own pleasures and comforts, not the less because they are transferred beyond this mortal sphere; and we shall be rebuked and brought back to simple pure worship, if we say, "There is no God but God."

Finally, the Hebrew prophets regarded themselves as in direct communication with Yahweh himself. This is important, for the Hebrew people were what is called a theocratic people. Perhaps the best notion of a theocratic nation is this,—One in which not the individual, but the nation, is the religious unit. That is to say, the Hebrews' conception, the popular

conception I mean, of Yahweh was this, that Yahweh favored the worshiper not as a man, but as a Hebrew, and that as one of the chosen people he was to be gathered under Yahweh's almightiness. Now it was a balance against this that the prophets considered themselves to come into direct, personal, individual relation with Yahweh, and to have his inspiration in their own souls, and to proclaim, therefore, by authority, his word, and say, "Thus saith the Lord." Therein these exalted teachers of the Hebrew people proclaimed the one absolute fundamental necessity and truth of religion, that you, that I, stand in the light of God's presence directly; that we need no intervention, no mediator, either by person or by church or by book, but that we stand as naked souls unto him, waiting in his presence as our eyes do in the glorious sunlight to behold by it all the earth. This is what makes religion a support, a joy and a life. Emerson says, "God enters by a private door into every individual;" and his emphasis is on the "every individual," since *to all* God comes; not to any chosen one here or anywhere, or at any time, but now and to all. And the next emphasis is on the "private door"; for why is it private? I suppose the seer means that each one has a different door, and that all doors alike open to God's presence and favor, not one door more than another. Or it may be at different times each man has a different door, as if he were builded from day to day, like a cathedral, with new porticoes and new windows for the entrance of heaven's light. The door may be perhaps a love of nature, a joy in the glorious and grand. Or the door may be a love of persons, a love of friends, by which we come to love God, by the scripture which our friends live to us or speak to us,—to love God, as Augustine said, and our friends in God and our enemies for God. Or it may be some great creation or work, or some noble cause, that is the door by which God enters. Whatever it be, he enters each heart and soul by its own door, and he enters surely if there be that door kept for the entrance by a consecrated will, striving earnestly to live in the light of the law of God. This I say is the sum, the foundation and glory of all religion. Or again, the door perhaps may be some great names and glories in the past. That is a good door. I dislike it not. Nay, I prize it greatly. The beauty of the Scripture, noble prophetic

names, Moses himself, Isaiah, and John and Jesus, and the gentle Huss, and many that come to us with prophetic halo around their heads, God-made, not man-made,—these may be the door by which God enters into us. But however it be, the great truth is that now he enters, that now the eternal life is in us, and we in it.

All this history of Yahweh in the Bible shows that religion grows noble and high with the growth of man. In the visions of the prophets and in the prayers of the people the thought of God was growing clearer, higher, nobler, purer continually. “Day unto day uttered speech, night unto night showed knowledge.” Once the prophets and people thought Yahweh dwelt only in one corner of the earth or in the heavens above that little territory. But such poor and limited thoughts of God made way, slowly but constantly, for higher and spiritual thoughts of him, till the psalmist sang,

“ If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
Even there shall thy hand lead me,  
And thy right hand shall hold me.”

Religion never was finished but always is finishing. There is no closed revelation. The thought of God, yea, let us say the *sight* of God, grows plainer and mightier and deeper and dearer to man’s spiritual vision, age by age. With meaning vaster than merely to take the scripture page or the past saint however glorious, this truth comes—

“ With meaning vaster,  
Coming faster  
Than my spirit can record,  
The saint, the seer, it shows in me ;  
And while I see  
How I am the buried good,  
I stand within the flood  
Of the eternal grace,  
Trembling to know I am God’s dwelling place.”



## SOME THINGS TO BE SURE OF.

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Some things to be sure of! Nothing perhaps is more impressive than the immensity and value of human knowledge. It seems sometimes as if there were no end, no beginning, to the splendor, the achievements, the glories of the intelligence of man. One of the pictures that my youth has left me, very vivid, is that of a grand old scholar, wrinkled, bowed, with a great noble head covered with a wild shock of long, thick, iron-gray hair, through which his eyes gleamed like coals. His learning seemed to me like an unfathomable sea; and when perhaps he knew not something himself, then he could tell exactly how and where to find out about it, which after all is one of the greatest parts of knowledge. I remember in my youthful reverence (for always I had the joy of having great reverence and affection for my teachers), I used to think that his knowledge was like a mountain, taking hold of the pivot of the earth, and reaching to invisible heights into the heavens. Such sights of human learning I say are very impressive; and also it is affecting, touching, glorious, to observe how men have tried to learn, what pains, what mighty efforts, what time, what wealth, they have spent to acquire information. It was about ten years ago, you know, that there occurred a notable total eclipse of the sun to be seen in some of our Western States; that is, the moon, not content with giving light at night and making the darkness beautiful, thought to try her hand at shading the day, and covered up the sun entirely in some places so that not a bit of him could be seen for some minutes. Now there are some things learned men wish to know about the sun which they can find out only when thus he is covered up, strange to say. So you know the astronomers went to Colorado, at the foot of the Rocky Hills, to see the spectacle of the moon veiling the sun's face.

They came from thousands of miles away, they crossed the ocean to come, only to look at the moon hiding the sun for three or four minutes. They brought their telescopes so as to see the great sight as well as they could; and in order to learn how to see it, and to be sure to be all ready, they went to the place many weeks beforehand, and lived in little tents or huts, and got their instruments all ready, and practiced with them every night during all those weeks. And it was arranged, too, that one man should look at one point, and another should study another point, so that they might learn as much as they could, instead of finding afterwards perhaps that all had been looking at the same point. And all their pains and trouble and work were given, and all the money which it cost was spent too, just for the *chance* of learning something; for if it had been cloudy, foggy, rainy, they could not have seen anything, and would have had to go home, after all their efforts, no wiser than they came. Now comes another total eclipse, to occur in a few months, to be visible, if clouds, vapors and winds consent, in the interior of Africa; and already governments and scientific societies are bestirring themselves, to send forth ships and instruments and men to the Dark Continent, to see and study the great spectacle. Such things are very impressive to me, as I have said,—this human struggle to learn. And men have been trying in just such ways for hundreds of years, yes, for thousands of years. If you were to do nothing but read every minute of every day of your lives, without stopping even to eat or sleep, you could not read all that has been learned.

And yet, the things which have been learned number as nothing, nothing, compared to the things we know not. The things we know not are hundreds of times more than the things we know, yes thousands of times, millions of times. There are millions of millions more of things which we know not, than of things which we know. We know not what the people are doing who live on Venus or Mars or Mercury, or any of the other stars. We even know not what the men and children are doing who live on the other side of the earth; and least of all do we know what the people are doing who are on the other side of life, in the unseen heavens. Then too, there are many things which we can guess at, but we know them not surely. You may think



you know what you will do to-morrow, or this afternoon, but you can be sure of nothing, because you cannot see one minute ahead, and a hundred things may happen in the next hour which you never dreamed of, and these things may change everything, so that you may not do at all as you thought you would. Many hundred years ago there were many people living in a town near the foot of a high mountain in sunny and beautiful Italy. One day, one sad and frightful day, the people of the little town were as busy as ever, the sun was shining as brightly as ever, or the rain falling as gently, or the grapes hanging as rich and purple from the vines on the hillside, and the children were playing or going to school. No doubt the men and women were talking of what they would do the next day, or in the afternoon, and they thought they could see very plainly what they would do, and the children were talking of the games they would play after dinner, or after school, or of a romp in the field they meant to have at evening, and they thought they could see how it would happen, and what a fine time was coming. But suddenly, not very far from midday, great flames burst with a mighty roar from the top of the mountain, steam and burning gas rushed from the crater in the mountain-top, making a noise greater than the roar of ten thousand engines. Huge rocks were hurled out into the air for hundreds of feet, and came rolling down the mountain side; rivers of red-hot melted stone poured over the edge of the crater, as you have seen water bubbling up from a spring, and flowed down the slopes, covering all the green fields and lovely places with fire. Ashes were thrown out of the blazing hole so fine, and so great in quantity, that in a very few minutes they gathered in the air like huge black clouds spreading out for many miles, and shutting out the sunlight as much as if the sun had set at midday, so that very soon it was as dark as night, and the ashes as blinding as a thick fog. Then the ashes began to fall in showers like gray snow, and they fell down on the little town, down on the streets, on the houses, on the gardens, on the men who had felt sure of what they would do that afternoon, on the children playing who had had no doubt of what romps they would have in the fields that evening, down, down, thicker and thicker, deeper and deeper. The frightened people ran crying into the streets, trying to run away into the open country, fathers,

mothers, carrying their little infants, or helping and urging along the old people, the grandfathers and grandmothers, the sick as well as the old, who could hobble only at any time and now in their fright hardly could move at all. But the streets were all dark, and the blinding ashes filled the people's eyes and fell thicker and deeper every moment, so that the poor men and women and children lost their way or gave up in despair. Some turned back to the houses, some fell tired out into the ashes, as travelers sometimes are lost in deep snow, some like soldiers who were "on duty," stood bravely still and would not leave their posts. The little town was filled with screams and cries. But the people could not see each other, only hear the cries coming out of the black fog. The ashes fell down on the cries and smothered them, on the streets, gardens, houses, and covered them all up. They were now very fine, like fine dust, and made their way into every little crack and crevice, got in at the windows and doors, filled up the rooms and buried the poor people alive. All the town was covered up; not a roof of a house, not a tower was to be seen where a few hours before there had been so many busy people. The ashes covered everything with a gray waste, like a desert. After a long time, by wind and rain and sun, earth was spread over the ashes, and mixed with them, grass began to grow, trees and bushes sprang up over the buried town, and at last it looked like any other part of the green field. Men forgot the town and could not tell the spot where it had been. A few years ago the place was discovered and men began to dig in the ground, and at last they dug out the town. They removed the ashes from the streets, they opened the houses and cleared them of ashes, and they found the bones of the buried people, old and middle-aged and children and babies, just as they had been caught and drowned in the ashes; some were standing, some were sitting, some on their knees, some lying down; a soldier was found standing erect in his sentry box, showing that he had been true to his duty at his post. Thus you see how much you can think of, but how little of it you can be sure of. The people of that place thought that surely whatever might happen to them one by one, they would not all die together, and that their little city would stand for many years. But they were all gone in an hour or two, and the city lasted not the day out.



I mean not to say of course that we need be afraid that any great flame will burst out of the earth and bury this pleasant city of ours in ashes this sunny day; no; yet it were little if this happened,—the eternal stars would not be shaken, nay, nor one soul perish. But I mean that we can see only a little way, and know only very little. How the questions of children force this home on us. The truth is, their questions are just as hard to the grown people as they are to the little ones; they puzzle us so much that all we can say is, “We know not, we know not.” Suppose that somewhere, on some star in the great heavens that shine every night with thousands of other stars, two angels were to stand. Suppose they had eyes which could see everything at all distances, no matter how covered up, so that they could see through stone walls as through glass or air, and as far as from here to the remotest star. Suppose these great beings each had a book and a pen, and that one of them should write down all the things we know, and even the guesses we make when we have no knowledge, and that the other one should write down the things we know not. The first would write a long time, to be sure; but at last he would make an end, and everything that men knew would be written down. But the other one, writing down the things we know not, would go on writing forever!

And yet, I have to say to you that in one way (and it is a very great way) we know a great deal more than we know not. Let us look at this a little more closely. Bethink you that how much one knows depends a great deal on *what kind* of things one knows, and but little on how many things. It is one thing to know many things, quite another to know much. It is one thing to have many facts at hand, which you can count and say, “Lo, how great is the sum of our knowledge;” it is another thing to have that knowledge which is wisdom, grace, resource, comprehension. Some things lately have forced home on me the thought, that there are persons brim-full of what we call talent, and yet very unintelligent. To comprehend is to surround with yourself, to cast yourself about things, so that they are collected, grouped, centered and contained within you; they are then comprised, controlled, and you, the compriser, controller, are wise. But if you include not the many things you are aware of, but they surround and hedge you in, if you have about

you a vast gathering and whirl of things, which stretch far out mass on mass, and make a wilderness in which you are a little matter dancing with the rest, so that you are not encircling and comprehending the things, but they have a sweep around you, then you may know things as multitudinous as the sands on the sea shore, and as barren too. I knew a man whose knowledge was vast; I could see no end of it; and yet he seemed to me to know nothing. He was versed wonderfully in all the gadding gossip of social life. I never knew anything about anybody that he knew not better. He knew everybody's name and history and position and fortune and family; he had climbed to the top branches of a hundred trees of pedigree; he was full of all the dance and freaks and babble of the social currents. He knew "what was going on;"—not indeed how the great world was going on, either in the heavens or in its place beneath, not "the stream of tendency," not the drift of thought, not the strain or energy of the world's thinking, not the world's music and poetry and love and pathos, not even the humor of the world's amusements. These things were unexplored heavens to him. But the maze of little events, he explored as with a magic clue. The difference is vast indeed between facts that are themselves knowledge, and facts that have no import or depth or worth, but are wastes of mind. It lies at the very base of wise and noble living, and is easy to understand, though not always easy to live up to, that whether a man knows much or little depends not on the number of things he knows, but on how much they are worth knowing. A good man said, long ago, that no one is any wiser for knowing the dimensions of a crocodile's tail, because it is no matter to any one whether the tail be five feet long or five feet and two inches, or whether the creature have any tail at all to speak of. Forget not this, that there are many kinds of knowledge which make no one any wiser.

Now I think you understand that I am neither playing with tricks of speech, nor am inconsistent. You see that there are millions of millions of things more which we know not, than of things which we know, and yet that it may be true that we know more than we are ignorant of, for the things that we know are greater perhaps than the things which we know not. And truly so they are; so much greater and grander and dearer that if I

were to speak with the tongues of angels and go on speaking forever, I could not even begin to tell how much greater and more noble and beautiful are even a few things which we know, than all the things which we know not. So much greater, grander, that any one of some things which we know is worth more than millions on millions of things before which we bow in our ignorance. To know that we ought to speak the truth is a greater thing, and worth more, than all the stars together!

Think how beautiful and splendid must be many things which we know not. We know not how the earth looks from the moon when it goes sailing through the sky, such a huge globe of light, if there be any creatures on the moon to see; astronomers tell us that probably it is one of the most transcendent sights of all the starry heavens. We know not how the great sun pours out its heat for thousands of thousands of years without cooling in the least. We know not how Saturn's rings look from that wondrous planet, nor how Jupiter's nights appear with his four moons, nor how things go on on a globe so big, thirteen hundred times as large as our earth, nor what peoples and kingdoms and things and kinds of creatures there may be on the stars which fill the heavens. It would be very grand to know these things. But to know that we must speak the truth, that we ought to love our fellow-men, that we are bound to act justly, that we are placed here to be faithful, good, kind, pure-minded, industrious, this is greater than to know any one of those splendid things, or all of them together, and millions more of them which we cannot even dream of.

This I tell you, nay, your own souls tell you, if there be any power of speech in them that they may answer, namely, that you *can feel sure* that it is better to do right than to do wrong. You may not always find it easy to see just what the right thing is, but always you can feel sure that the right thing is the best thing when you have found it. And sure, too, that it is best for you to try hard to find it. You cannot tell for one hour ahead what will become of you, or what will happen to you, excepting that you will be safe whatever happens. You cannot see far into this life, nor at all into the other life. At any moment the hour may come when you shall lie down, and, if there be time enough left, fold your hands, and fall asleep as Stephen did, not awaking

any more, but lying still in that strange trance of death. It is not dreadful or painful or sad; but it is strange, and we know hardly anything about it, or how it feels, or what comes after it. But this we know, that whether we live in this country or in China or Africa, or whether we live in this world for one minute or for fifty years, or whatever may be waiting for us after we die, this *we know*, that it is better to be gentle than rough, better to be kind than unkind, better to speak the truth than to tell lies, better to be faithful than to be neglectful, better to help others than to hurt them. These things, we are *sure of*.

Now this sure knowledge is a very grand knowledge. I will give three reasons why this knowledge is so very grand, and so end my sermon.

The first reason is that justice, kindness and love, and all kinds of goodness, are what make us happy on this earth, and make life so full of gladness and so beautiful. Think for a moment how much dear and lovely joy there is. Think how wonderful it is that even when there are dark clouds of sorrow, they are always edged with some beautiful thing. Why, as I look at you while I speak to you, or think of you while I sit writing for you, often I seem to be suddenly in heaven. Your bright eyes, your gentle looks, your kindling smiles, your earnest faces, some so fresh and young and fair, some so much lovelier still with life's middle-aged or aged beauty, all so sweet, so good, why, what great joys they show! How glad they make the hearts of you that live near any well of this happiness! Our thousands of joyful moments and pleasant things come from simple goodness and from nothing else. There is no other source of them. If there were no truthfulness, no kindness, no faithfulness, where were the smiles? How could any one be happy if he were selfish himself, and every one were selfish, and all were cruel and false together? This is the first reason then why it is so grand a knowledge to know what right means, this reason namely, that it is this knowledge that makes all our precious happiness and all life's golden beauty.

The second reason is, that right is the same everywhere, so that when we know what is right we have a knowledge so great and mighty that it is true everywhere, and at all times. For if it be wrong to tell a falsehood here, it is wrong in China or Africa, it is wrong in Jupiter or Saturn, or Mars, or any star.

The Infinite Almightyness could not make it otherwise, because *he is that very fact*, and cannot unmake himself. Whatever sort of creatures may live in any of the stars that twinkle by night in the sky, we may be sure that if they know enough to talk or think, they have decided that it is wrong, base and mean to tell lies. So you see this is a universal knowledge, as infinite as God. There is one kind of climate here where we live, and another one in the far south, and still another in the far north; there may be climates and strange states of things in other planets which we know not, and cannot imagine; but there is no climate and no abode of people where it is not glorious and right to tell the truth. And whatever difference there may be between our earth and any of the stars, we may be sure that this is the same everywhere. So I say that to know the right is to have a splendid knowledge.

The third reason why these simple truths which we know are so great, is that they are known to us because we are children of the All-Father, the God and Father of all, who is infinitely good and true. I say this is the reason that we know these great things,—because we are of God. Look at this earnestly for a moment. Why is it, think you, that right is right everywhere, and at all times? Why is it that what is good, pure, kind, loving in spirit here must be so too in all the stars, and everywhere? It is because the one Infinite Light who is God makes the stars as well as this earth. I say not *has* made, but *makes*, all the time—makes all creatures as well as you and me. And wherever God lives and works, truth and right must be the same, because his nature is the same, and he makes things all the time just as his nature is, rules and guides all things according to his nature; and as he is infinitely good and true, so truth and goodness always are the same, and always the almighty things with his Almightyness,—in every house, in every country, in every star. Therefore, to know the right is so grand a thing. It is to be lifted up to a great height, to receive light direct from God, and to feel ourselves to be his children, formed in his image.

Think what it is to be children of God, and to call ourselves so!

We know that we made not this world, and the sky with all its stars; we are sure of that. O! how sure too that the Power which made them all, and made them so beautiful, is the



same power that makes them now, in the hollow of whose hand they lie! We may be sure that that Power takes care of us every moment, all the young and all the old, all who here live, all in the other life, the same as of all the stars and the earth. We may be sure that Power, in some way too great and strange for us to see, takes care to keep all the good things, and lets the bad things fall to pieces, takes care of good acts, good thoughts, good feelings, good words, but makes the bad ones as if they had never been. Over us all, over all the men who ever have lived, we may be sure this Power has been ruling, helping on the good, the pure, the true; we may be sure that it will rule over all the men that ever will live, and will take care of the world forever. We name the Power. We cannot see it; nay, I will not say that,—we *have* eyes to see it. We cannot tell all about it, nay, nor compared to it can we tell much, it is so very great, without beginning or end. But we name it; and O think what it means, that we name it! We call the Power, God. We love and adore this Power by this Great Name. We are sure that whether we know many things or know only a very little, we may trust this Power whom we name the Father, who rules over all things, all we know, all we guess at, all we hope for, all we know nothing of, “with the glory of a Father,” without whom not a little sparrow falls to the ground.

“Little Children,” take hold of this great knowledge. How little we know if we count the things! O! the millions of things we know not! If we think of them so, we seem to be buried, like spiritual driftings under a great dead heap of things. But then think of the things we know, so great and high that they are better and grander however few, yea, any one of them, than all the unknown millions, and any one of them a knowledge more splendid than to know the history of ten thousand suns and all planets that revolve around them, and all the people on those planets! Then truly we shall go our way every day sure that in trying to put this mighty knowledge into our lives, so that we may be according to this knowledge gentle and truthful, upright, kind, loving and honest, as this knowledge is grander than that of all the stars, so with it our lives will be brighter than all the starry heavens; and even if sometimes sad, yet in grief still all alight with peace for ourselves, and with beaming helpfulness for others.

## SOLOMON AND THE LILIES.

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"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."—MAT. VI, 28-29.

I suppose this text was original with Jesus. Very many of the sayings of Jesus, as often I have told you, were current maxims among the Jews; often they were lessons of the scribes heard in the schools where the ancient Scripture was expounded and morality based on the law and the prophets. Sometimes, no doubt, they were flying maxims, ranging from mind to mind as birds fly among trees. These Jesus seized, because he knew a good, worthy and useful thing at once, and took it. 'Tis a finer sign of greatness to know the beauties that surround us than to invent or discover new ones; for to produce good things may have a smack of ambition or pride in it, but to know and take good things with homage is pure generosity and admiration. As a man either must not breathe or else breathe the air which is about him, so must a soul have no life or else drink of the life which is in the time and people. Whence Jesus, being a great life in himself, like a great pair of lungs breathed deeply of the life about him. Therefore, I say, the sayings of Jesus are full of echoes of the old Scriptures, of the sayings of the Rabbins, and of the wisdom of the people. Nevertheless he is very original, and this originality is in the form in which he says things, and in the manner,—a living manner. For a great soul takes some common truth, central, like the earth's axis, and cries it aloud once more with so living a voice that people start and tremble to see how great the thing is which perchance they have been repeating since their childhood. Jesus was very original in his figures and illustrations. He had the heart and



the eye of a great poet, which is to say, a great lover of things as they are. For only one who loves what is, will have clear sight of what ought to be. Jesus had an eye wide open. He saw the birds, the flowers, the grain, the tares, the trees, the seeds, and all manner of people as they worked, joyed, wept, prayed; and of these things he made wonderful stories, the like of which never were known before, nor have been since; for there are no illustrations in all the world together like Jesus' parables for beauty, grace and force. A society of learned Jews in Paris, authors of a book called "The Sources of the Sermon on the Mount," in which they give many passages from the Old Law and the prophets, and from Talmudical writings, parallel to Jesus' maxims in the Mountain Sermon, find no parallel to these phrases about Solomon and the lilies, and they dismiss them with this remark, "These verses comprise no moral precept; consequently there is no source to trace them from." So here, I think we have an instance probably of just Jesus' own way of looking about him and of saying things. Suppose we unfold his saying a little. As he compares things, so let us follow him. We will first look at Solomon and then at the lilies.

The magnificence of Solomon had become proverbial among the Jews, a point of national pride indeed. Nay, beyond the nation and country the fame of his glory had gone, as is shown by the story of the Queen of Sheba, who from Arabia Felix came to see Solomon, drawn by stories of his magnificence; also of his wisdom, for this was great fame indeed. So the Queen put hard questions to him, which he answered easily, and astonished her. But indeed with the splendor of the household she was quite overcome; for the account in the book of Kings says that when she saw his house and the meat of his table and his servants, and his cup-bearers, and the apparel of them all, "there was no more spirit in her." And she said to the King, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." It is written that she gave proof of her admiration by presenting the King with a great store of spices, and precious stones, and with one hundred and twenty talents of gold, or near

seventy-five thousand dollars. But to Solomon this was a trifle, and very like he was not to be out-done, but presented her an equivalent in some shape, since it is recorded that "Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." As to Solomon's money, we read that the amount that came to him in a year, in gold, was six hundred and sixty-six talents, or near four hundred thousand dollars; and this was not the whole, for it was over and above that which came from traders and merchants and by other ways, says the book of Kings. Having this princely income a year, this superb King knew how to apply it grandly. As to his own house there are incredible stories, the soberest of which is that he had one hundred and four wives. With these and all the attendants and servants innumerable, it is no wonder that eighty measures of fine flour and sixty measures of meal, and eighty whole oxen and one hundred sheep, and much game and fatted fowls, were the daily supply of his table. He lived in a house which had been thirteen years in building, adorned with cedar and other beautiful woods, and with hewn stones. Silver was not to be thought of for his household utensils and his table service; they were of pure gold. He had a throne of rich ivory inlaid with gold, and carved lions were around it. And in his house there hung five hundred massive targets or shields, two hundred large and three hundred smaller, plated with beaten gold. These precious targets were for the soldiers who made the body-guard of the monarch. He had an army comprising 40,000 stalls of horses, so the Scriptures read, and 12,000 horsemen and 1,400 chariots; also dromedaries. Vast abundance of food was collected for the horses and other animals. Also he had a great commercial navy, from which riches of all kinds flowed to his realm and to his own treasury. When he wished to build the temple, this rich king levied an army of 30,000 workmen whom he employed seven years in building the great structure. All manner of precious and costly materials were gathered, elaborate carvings of cedar wood, and profuse gold for the utensils of the temple and for the hinges of the doors; and he overlaid the house with pure gold and threw chains of gold across it. He had two immense cherubim made, carved of olive wood. He set in the temple two vast pillars of brass, 85 feet high and 24 feet around, and on the top of them he set

chapters of molten brass. The olive wood cherubim were 20 feet high, and 20 feet also from tip to tip of the out-stretched wings; and when set up in the temple, side by side, the tips of their wings touched each other, and the tips of the other wings touched the walls on both sides. Even the very floor of the house was covered with gold, and the walls with carvings of cherubim, of trees, and of flowers. Also he made many baths of brass for the temple, and besides these, a vast sea or brazen basin, called in the Scriptures a "molten sea," 20 feet in diameter and 60 feet around and 10 feet deep. And this vast brass basin stood on twelve brazen oxen, three facing each point of the compass. The basin was a hand-breadth thick, and the brim was finely wrought like the cup of a lily.

This was the wealth and splendor of the king, according to Jewish tradition. With this glory and pomp Jesus compared the lilies. Suppose we stand with the gentle Nazarene a little, and look on the flowers of the field; nay, let us do as he asked, consider of them. He used a strong word, translated consider. The Greek word means to learn or observe thoroughly, so as to understand. It is as if Jesus said, "We have walked back and forth here every day and seen these lilies, but yet, having eyes we have seen not. Let us stop now and really see,—consider of them, look at them, understand them." Palestine was then a blooming and beautiful country; nay, even long afterward, yea, and still now we learn from travelers of the lovely flowers of the fields in their season, shining white blooms, many to a stem, or other kinds that may be called lilies, of rich and varied colors. Jesus looked at these. Perhaps they lay like a great tapestry woven with silk floss in rich dyes; or mayhap, there was only one lovely spike that had strayed thither, blooming by the wayside. What matters it whether a profusion or one? The Master's eye would see the glory of them the same. So he stopped and looked awhile, his heart rising, we may guess, whither the lilies pointed. And then he said quietly, "What beauty, what charm, what perfection! But whence is it? Ah, that question maketh every flower a psalm; for we see no toiling nor spinning here, and yet, look you now whether Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these."

Dear youth, rabbi, gentle Nazarene, holy wanderer, we will

follow thy thought. We will search what the lily hath to set beside Solomon's splendor. We will count its glories as we have told a few of Solomon's. First, there is the beauty of form, its lovely bell, its delicate petals, its vase nodding on the stem. But is this beauty greater than the costly woods and the gold, the carvings, the robes and the circling trains in which the King was arrayed? Secondly, the lily has delicacy of color, richness and beauty too; but were these greater than the silken hues, the rich carvings of woods, the gorgeous tapestry, and the ivory tints of Solomon's palace? Thirdly, the lily sways on its stem as gracefully as if a beam of light had been caught and molded into a flowery bell,—the waves of the light changed into an inexpressible still subtleness, the leap of the light, sixty thousand leagues in a second, transmuted to a perfection of confined motion, a lovely, swaying slenderness; and not only its movement in the breeze is perfection, but each stop or attitude is a seizure of delicate curves. Well, were these unequaled by the grace, the charm and subtle lines of the carvings of palms and flowers on the temple walls by the King's workmen, the 30,000 who seven years labored in the structure? I know not. It is sure that what men can do is as natural as what the earth pours forth untilled. If men can see beauty, their hands are glorious tools wherewith to mould it. I cannot say that because God makes the lily, therefore it is more beautiful than all Solomon's splendor; for God made man, and perchance it is greater to make a maker of beauty than to make a beautiful thing, and the maker who is made may effect a beauty glorious and worthy of his heavenly spring of life. Yet I think it is true, as Jesus said when he looked at the lilies, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Why is this true? Let us follow a little to see.

First, the lily is very simple. Jesus, it seems to me, was thinking of the pure beauty of a few simple charms compared with rich array. Here in the lily is but a comeliness of form, a slender witchery of grace, having but one color, or with mayhap a little shading or a fleck or two of contrasting hues; and that is all. Its exquisite perfection is wrought of very little. It has a beauty like a few lines in a face, which mean a depth of soul. Nothing is heaped up in the flower; it is chaste, pure, with the

kind of charm which a clear ringing note has, from a silver bell or tuneful string, or a pure pipe. It is like a melody wherein notes following each other become one,—a pure thought or feeling. Oh! I care not what manner of richness there be in profusion, how splendid the array, how rolling on one another like waves be the adornments, no, nor how well fitted, either, without jarring! Still always there will be a beauty in simplicity which the gorgeous collection hath not. It is superior beauty, beauty I might say in itself, the essence, the living soul of it, which, says Milton, “unadorned is adorned the most,” because it is so perfect that, as it can spare nothing, so naught can be added. I would that more we understood this beauty of simplicity which is the beauty of the earth and sky, of crystals and flowers, of water, stars, tones, eyes, smiles, faces, hands, shapes, motions. If such beauties were gathered in houses, in costumes, and in manners, we should have the beauty wherewith the lily surpassed Solomon’s array, as Jesus said. For a profusion of beauties is not beauty, perchance; and even if they be well matched and in proportion, still if they be over-much, they have not the lily’s beauty, which is pure perfection.

Secondly, the beauty of the lily is seen to be in keeping with all the conditions around it. It wrongs nothing; it comes of no unwholesome root; it has no bad contrasts; it offends no one with pity for what it has drawn on. For the earth is made for its root, and the soil has its own beauty of freshness, aroma, color, substance. But not so Solomon’s array; for his apparel cost many a poor man’s garment, and the dye of his robes was slaves’ blood, and all his array was sucked rankly, as weeds grow, from heaps of oppression and taxation. Make me aught as fair as you will, heap color on color with harmony, or shape on shape with grace, or gather and array soft fabrics and golden hangings in which rainbows and sunbeams seem woven,—and what then? If they be luxuries, they are not fair. Though crimson be beautiful, it is not so when it is a blood stain; no, but mournful and horrible. If Bacon be wise when he says “a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love,” I say it is wisdom too that beauties make not beauty, nor fair things comeliness, nor pomps magnificence, when these are feasts built



on fasts, surfeits hung on gripes of hunger, pleasures bred of pains and laughs of complaints, and all a flaunting array wrung from the labor of other bodies that never taste in their mouths, or in their heart or soul, the delicacies and the charms. Therefore the lily has a pure loveliness which is heavenly and comes of purity, and is not less glorious and divine that it is so simple. But the array of Solomon is like the surface of floating tarry or other unclean refuse, counterfeiting the iris of pearls, the fire-pied opal, the prismatic sun ray, but black underneath and shameful.

Again, the lily's charms, which before I have mentioned, I mean its simple beauties of form, slender grace, and plain softness of color—these are a part of the very life of the lily; not something put on as colors, carvings, plaitings and over-laying of gold in a house. Not so; the lily's beauties are a part of the lily's self. For the lily is clothed with these beauties and yet naked. Who can cut into them, or under them, and find somewhat underneath on which they lie? Nay, but they are through and through the lily, the lovely shape being in every atom of the substance, and the graceful delicacy in every part, and the colors sinking through the soft cells; whereby the lily is not something adorned, but itself is adornment; and not something with shape laid on it, but itself is grace and form. If we look at Solomon for the like of this, it is not his apparel or his great array whatsoever that we can compare, but only Solomon's body; and if I mistake not, the selfish and degenerate life in this so great luxury, pride, glitter, flourish and surfeit, could build no fine body, neither in shape nor in the bright and clear blushes of virtuous health; nor do aught but enervate, degrade, misshape and blot the human form divine. Jesus indeed did well to say that not Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like the lilies, since the lily's raiment was but the lily in all its light, freedom, beauty and very life. But Solomon's raiment was put on, hiding a body wherein vile wantoning had dug bad seams running with the tears of the poor. Ay, he spoke well, that nature-loving Nazarene, the lover of flowers and birds and trees and grain, sheep, mustard-seeds and men, he spoke well; for there is no divine beauty that can be taken off and hung on a peg; and if the vesture of Solomon were in a thousand parts and every part a vesture, gleaming with gems and gold and Tyrian dyes,

they could not array the body as the shape and color of health do, nor make the face noble, which is the beauty of the face, nor be true magnificence, nor aught but dross and waste before the beauty of the lily, which is only itself.

Again, there is this very lovely charm about the lily's beauty that there is no rivalry in it. It is not pitted against any other lily or flower; it seeks excellence, but not to get the better of another or to set itself off by contrast. Nay, in no way it thinks of any other, but simply of being beautiful; and this is a kind of worshipfulness, an uplooking toward infinite beauty, a holy purpose of life, or perhaps better I may say, a holy purpose to live, without thought to live better than another, but only to live according to life, which is beauty and glory and strength. But what were Solomon's pomps, parades, gauds, and fringes but comparison of himself with his nobles or with other princes, that not merely he might shine, but outshine others? Oh this is a mean and foolish temper, besmirched with envy if there be any richer than ourselves, and beclouded more still with all the envies which thus are caused in others whose humor or simplicity is turned awry and their bosoms filled with heart-burning. In my soul I abhor the temper which has no peace in excellence, but only in surpassing others, and no joy in beauty unless it be greater than some others have, and no thanks for fortune unless it grow against the shadow of some other's failure. It is unlovely to be happy that we leave others behind or that they cannot keep pace with us. This is not beauty, nor splendor, nor fair raiment; and when any glory has this temper with it, a king with all the glory is not arrayed like one of these lilies.

Finally, if the lily be charming in its beauty because in no way it thinks of itself, not wishing to compare itself with another, or to win in a race, this is the same as to say that it thinks not of others to be admired by them. Nay, it would bloom the same in a wilderness; and this fact an old Hebrew poet saw to be divine beauty and blessedness in the herb of the field, which he says springs the same in the desert, in the wilderness where there is no man. An English poet has sung of the flowers that "blush unseen," that they "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But therein he has had not the Master's heart, the soul of Him of Galilee, the spirit of the Nazarene, who,



standing by the wayside and comparing the lilies with Solomon, bethought him, I must believe, that the sweetness and beauty of the lily were its reasons for being, and that beauty was never a waste, but great riches, although but in a flower's bosom, unwitnessed, unvisited. The Nazarene, I say, saw that this sincerity arrayed the blossom in more divinity than "doth hedge a king." Comparing the flowers with Solomon, who in purple and fine linen sat for admiration on his ivory throne, and would have bemoaned himself or have squatted perhaps on the turf if no throngs had been by to applaud his high seat, Jesus said that the King in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. A poet has thought like this about his verse, counting it praise and greatness if the verse be true and sincere. He says,—

"Ah, 'tis an easy thing  
To write and sing,  
But to write true, unfeigned verse, is very hard."

The poet means that verse must not be robed, as it were for multitudes to shout around, nor adorned that any may praise, but only true and unfeigned and for itself. And truly, whatever is painted or put on for another's eye, and elsewhere left in darkness, hath no lily's beauty.

Look now at the gorgeous King and the simple lily, and consider them as the Master's saying has set them before us. What garments have we seen the lily clothed withal? What but simple beauty of form and chaste brightness of color and a swaying slenderness of grace, and these all through it and in it, the color and the shape not being spread on it, but living throughout it; and to all these we have to add the thoughts that breathe in it, which I have set forth,—that it is simplicity; and that its sweet beauty is in keeping with all its environs and united with them in peace; and that naught is put on by it any more than made by toiling and spinning, but only grown; and that in its honied heart there is no rivalry, nor doth it bloom to surpass others; and that it seeks not applause nor fame, but only to be what it is, nor would be a waste even in a wilderness. And what withal was Solomon arrayed? With what but heaps of things that were not of him but were put on him, and he no better for them, and other men worse and stricken with woes. Truly Jesus was right and the lily was the beautiful being, and

Solomon in all his glory not arrayed like one of these. O! to value the right thing! O! to prize the precious! O! to love the lovable! O! to adore the adorable! This is the secret of life. How many go straying far away, prizing what has a taint, valuing the worthless, loving what truly is hateful and makes us so, adoring what is but an idol made with hands. But the secret of life, the secret which lifts life high, is to take what truly is set forth by God to be taken and not to be left or put away; and to love what he hath made akin in value to the human heart, and to worship what comes of his divinity and is everlasting, which is simplicity and pure beauty, and kind affection, and the love of goodness for itself, and a comradeship with all without wishing to make any seem less or be less. These are the first things. Whoso knows them, that they are first, and follows after them, stands close by the Son of Man from Nazareth while he looks on the lilies and says that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

## THE PERFECT.

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“Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

—MATT. 5: 48.

This text has been misunderstood often, for lack of looking at the context. What Jesus commands is not perfection. This is impossible to us. He means a wide and all-embracing kindness, like the divine love. Paraphrasing freely the passage from the forty-third verse to the end of the chapter, Jesus speaks thus: “You know that some old teachers have allowed you to hate your enemy, if you will love your neighbor. But I tell you that your enemy also is to be loved, and that, if persons use you ill, you must pray for them; for you are the children of the heavenly Father, and it is thus that he acts. Doth he not make his sun to rise on the good and on the bad alike, and send his rain the same on the just and on the unjust? If ye love them that love you, and give only the salutes which ye receive, ye do no more than all men do, even bad men and aliens. But ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, and deal gently with the good and the bad alike, just as he sends sunshine and rain on the just and on the unjust.” This text, therefore, teaches the duty of charity and forgiveness, with the divine perfection of compassion as our guide, help, and aim.

The term, “Perfection,” was used much among the Jews. The writings of the Rabbins speak of perfect charity, perfect penitence, perfect prayers, perfect sacrifice, perfect faith, perfect covenant, perfect worship or religion. The Israelites were a perfect people, they said, after receiving the law from Moses. An Epistle of the New Testament says, “Perfect love casteth out fear.” The Rabbins taught that our love of God must be perfect,

and sometimes defined this perfect love as that which was the same in all conditions, in good or ill fortune, continuing to bless God in pain or in pleasure alike.

My text, I say, commands not us to be perfect; for how is that possible? We cannot be perfect *outwardly*, in our deeds; for how be sure always to do the wise and right thing, unless we have perfect knowledge and understand all things? Neither can we be perfect *inwardly*, in all our impulses, desires, affections, passions, which are so hard to rule and guide; for how can every rising feeling, every sudden emotion; flash of thought, inclination, craving, response, vehemence, thrill and throb, be without blemish, unless we be perfect in nature,—which surely we are not! Therefore, perfection is not required by any wise precept, like that of my text; nor will any power, human or divine, judge us by that standard.

But now a strange fact comes forth. While perfection in act or impulse cannot be expected or required of us, yet *conscience seems to exact it* in every instance. If we be not perfect, it would seem that we shall sin sometimes; yet conscience blames us notwithstanding. We cannot do wisely and righteously always, yet we reproach ourselves whenever we do evil. Whence is this strange contradiction? What means this law in us by which we seem driven to exact of ourselves what, if we interpret aright our constitution, God does not require of us? Strange that, if we be imperfect by nature, we should be stung by remorse at every falling-short of perfection.

But, now, if this be stated in another way, it will not seem strange; the difficulty will vanish. The truth is this: that, although perfection is not required of us, it is required that we should be *satisfied with nothing less* and count naught else worthy to be our moral end. Therefore, if we can be satisfied with nothing less than the perfect, clearly every defect of will, act, or impulse, will be attended with dissatisfaction.

This paradox burns in us,—If, being imperfect, we also were satisfied with the imperfect, we no longer should be imperfect. For imperfection can mean only that our actual condition is below that which is our true ideal; but if imperfection itself were this ideal, then it were not imperfection for us, because it were what we were made to be.

To state this plainly without paradox: If we were allowed to be *satisfied* with aught less than perfection, less than the wholly right, the absolutely good, the eternally and perfectly righteous, then this lower order would be the truth and the right to us, and the end of our being would be attained.

Perhaps this condition of us, by which we are enmeshed in imperfection by nature, and yet by reason of that nature cannot be at peace with aught less than perfection, may be made plainer by an illustration. It is as if we were travelers on a long road, stretching far before us, So far away that the journey seems endless, rise the towers of a beautiful city, like the vision that broke on the mind of Wordsworth's "Solitary," when he stood on a mountain crag after a great storm had passed, and "a single step that freed him from the skirts of the blind vapor opened to his view"—

"Glory beyond all glory ever seen  
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!  
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,  
Was of a mighty city—boldly say  
A wilderness of building, sinking far  
And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,  
Far sinking into splendor—without end!  
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,  
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,  
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high  
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright  
In avenues disposed; their towers begirt  
With battlements that on their restless fronts  
Bore stars,—illumination of all gems!"

We are only on the road. The road is lost in night as far behind us as the gleaming city lies before us. Therefore it is not asked of us that our journey be accomplished already and we joining in the songs of the multitude at the gates whose music floats out to us even at this distance. But, with that vision in our eyes and that sound in our ears, we reproach ourselves if every step be not toward those seraphic citadels, if we loiter or faint in the march, or look to right or left, or have ears for any siren's song.

We cannot be perfect in act or in soul, and yet we can be satisfied with nothing else. Herein, we bear the trace of God's way of creation, of his nature in us and of his method with us. By the imperfection of our deeds and desires, we recall our origin and the long and slow journey we have made from brute life.

But by the perfection of our moral aspiration, naught less than which satisfies us, we show the divine source of that enormous travail, that endless evolution,—endless forward, endless backward, having no stop and no beginning,—by which we emerge from existence to life, from sensation to thought, love, hope, and worship, yearning toward the divine Being, the Eternal, Immutable, Almighty Fatherhood of God from which we spring. It cannot be required that we be perfect; but that we can be satisfied with naught else is the secret of religion within us, of the worship of the One Infinite Life, Thought, Love, Power, Holiness, Beauty, Truth, Mercy,—Eternal, Almighty, Pervading, Transcendent, Immutable, Creating, Preserving, Redeeming, Judging, Condemning, Blessing, Inspiring, Revealing. We cannot lose this worship, and live. The imperfection which we are has that reminiscence of its source of life that it adores Perfection in which we live and move and have being, and thus is set in ourselves an ideal of ourselves which will be satisfied only with the perfect,—that is, never satisfied, and love only the divine,—that is, love with increasing joy forever. Here will I read you a noble poem by Wasson:—

## IDEAL.

Angels of growth, of old in that surprise  
 Of your first vision, wild and sweet,  
 I poured in passionate sighs  
 My wish unwise  
 That ye descend my heart to meet,—  
 My heart so slow to rise!

Now thus I pray: Angelic be to hold  
 In heaven your shining poise afar,  
 And to my wishes bold  
 Reply with cold,  
 Sweet invitation, like a star  
 Fixed in the heavens old.

Did ye descend, what were ye more than I?  
 Is't not by this ye are divine,—  
 That, native to the sky,  
 Ye cannot hie  
 Downward, and give low hearts the wine  
 That should reward the high?

Weak, yet in weakness I no more complain  
 Of your abiding in your places.  
 Oh, still, how'er my pain  
 Wild prayers may rain,  
 Keep pure on high the perfect graces  
 That stooping could but stain!



Not to content our lowness, but to lure  
 And lift us to your angelhood,  
 Do your surprises pure  
 Dawn far and sure  
 Above the tumult of young blood,  
 And star-like there endure?

Wait there,—wait, and invite me while I climb;  
 For, see, I come!—but slow, but slow!  
 Yet ever as your chime,  
 Soft and sublime,  
 Lifts at my feet, they move, they go  
 Up the great stair of time.

But how shall we keep the Perfect before our thoughts, to live in the light of it? There are many ways or helps: I will speak of four.

We ought to look at the glorious works of God, and think about them. It is not possible to say what the perfection of physical glory and loveliness may be. Perhaps on this earth we tread but on the threshold of inner chambers filled with unimaginable sublimities and beauties, of which the grandeurs of mountain, sun, and sea give us no image. It is certain there are places in the heavens where sights of splendor and majesty are visible surpassing all our earthly skies, by day or night. Nevertheless, this little earth of ours, whether we think of its sublime and awful scenes, or of its grand and wide beauties, or of its delicate and hidden loveliness, surpasses all we can express in hymn and music. It loads the mind, even unto staggering, with weight of feeling. The infinity of the starry heavens; the grandeur of mountains; the majesty of the sea; the shades of interminable forests, in which immense rivers are flowing; and the thicket, the tree-tops, the marsh, and the water, all teeming with radiant life,—

“Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks, and emerald turf,  
 Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,  
 Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,  
 Molten together, and composing thus,  
 Each lost in each, a marvelous array;”

the roar that pours over the earth like music, so vast that sounds of all kinds and of every pitch blend in perfect harmonies,—winds, rains, torrents, the grinding of ice, the plash of waves, the clamor of ocean, the trumpet of thunder, night's insects and the morning carols of birds, blent with the wide murmur when Zephyr tunes her harp of tree-tops, all these combined in sound

“That ceases not to flow,  
Like smoke, along the level of the blast,  
In mighty current,”—

such ravishment of eye and of ear as these things fill the earth withal, every day, well may be called Perfect, well may wrap the mind in thoughts of that Perfection of Eternal Life of whom all this unspeakable beauty is but *the appearing!*

Drink deep of the earth's beauty, and fall asleep on that innocent wine: thou wilt dream Perfection.

Another instructor in the thought of the Perfect is Love. Ay, and a wondrous instructor! It seems all but the only thing in which pure perfection dwells in man or earth. The earth is full of sunshine, yes, but of wild storms too, and freezing cold. There is fruitfulness and plenty, yes, and droughts, floods, ravages of insects and of fire. And where find a man who is all perfect? The noblest have their frailties. Nay, even in what issue if not Love, will you come on perfection? The greatest achievements have some blots of failure. The most glorious works wrap up errors. The noblest poem, domed like the sky for grandeur, has ambuscades of imperfection. No intelligence, no power or will, no morality, force of enterprise, industry, but has some flaw, nor was ever any seen among men, nor could be. But, unless eye and mind mislead us much, sometimes we do see examples of perfect Love.

This happens in high places and low alike. Love is not cold in rags, nor any warmer under a king's ermine. Anywhere it may be perfect. At least, we do see instances of love in which no blemish appears to our eyes, nay, even to minute searching; and this is sensible perfection. We do meet forms,—or read of them, which is only to meet them with the mind's eye,—of devotion, faithfulness, tender thoughtfulness, so encompassing, that to look on such love is like a sight of the Infinite sky; for in the day of joy this love is a heaven of light; and in the night of sorrow, a firmament of heavens—“Creation widened.”

These thoughts have come to me sometimes when I have seen transient looks, but illimitable, brush with their wings a parental face; or when I have seen an aged countenance in whose serenity Love shows perfected by exercise,—perfect at least beyond all my ken of blemish. For these sights I give thanks; for then I believe in the Perfect.

An other way to travel to the perfect is to look at our fellow-men. Behold first their march in great congregations, nations, races, continents of peoples. For this will teach us the law of the providence of God, whereby humanity is led like a child and schooled to virtue. All about us are evils, distressing, monstrous,—wars, cruelties, injustice, deceit, sickness and pain, agonies of love, loss, failure, disappointment. It is not easy—nay, close at hand, who is able?—to sink these dire things in Perfection, and leave no taint of foul color, no ripple of disturbance. But look at the march of the race, at the long stretches of time in which facts group themselves to laws before our wondering eye, and you will see a transporting glory, even Infinite Perfection. You will discern that the *tendency* of things is away from the evil, that the seal of life is set only on the good, and that the sure effect of all things is “to make the bad deed as if it had never been.” Though right be “forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,” you will see that scaffold “swaying the future,” and God “standing in the shadows, taking care of his own.” The tendency of things is illuminated with the Perfection of their Divine Home, and unto their home they must come like rivers to the sea. When our look is turned not on the rough places in the road, or on falls by reason of them, but on that city whither the road leads, we go always singing and praising.

Turn to your fellow-men, also, to see and to rejoice in the best and holiest of your kind. Bring your eye from its sweep of the whole, to see the greatest and best persons. As I write in the early morning, I hear a voice singing in the house. It gives me a sudden sense of the Infinite. Such did the sight of a star give Wordsworth, it is said, when the poet laid his ear to the earth to listen for an approaching diligence, and his eye caught the gleam of the heavenly jewel hanging on a hill-top. Such sense of the Infinite and the Perfect do the great and holy spirits of the earth give us,—the voices of the prophets, the far-shining saints. They are witnesses of something holy; and, if they seem to fulfill our dream, their humility and sorrow and aspiration, their “Why call ye me good? There is none good but One, that is God,” give us a dream of *their dream*,—Eternal and Perfect Holiness.

Turn to your fellow-men still more nearly, looking at the persons who are about you and live with you. Here, though they all are very imperfect (and happy art thou, if thou seem to thyself most imperfect of all,) thou wilt find each has some one grace, at least, in which he comes well-nigh perfection; nay, it seems sometimes as if that one grace lived in him with the whole perfectness of heaven. In one, thou wilt find a devotion, in which love and duty blend to a rare beauty of self-forgetful affection; in another, thou wilt see the perfection of cheerful, serene, uncomplaining endurance; in another, thou wilt discover high untainted truthfulness that nothing can frighten or break; thou wilt behold in another the perfect strength of a will to do, to restrain, to undertake; thou wilt discern in another inexhaustible benevolence, pity, generosity; in another, thou wilt descry a delicate sense of duty and a tender conscience of heavenly quality; in another, thou wilt recognize a rare completeness of gentle humility, joined with self-discipline; thou wilt mark pure moral courage in another; thou wilt distinguish sincere piety in another; thou wilt look in another on justice, and in another on forgiveness, and on self-control in another. Look for these good things, love them, feed thy soul on them; and thus, if thou have many companions, thou wilt surround thyself with many graces. For each will give his best for thy asking, if thou hast eyes to see the best; and it will be very nigh perfection, and all will make a heavenly atmosphere in which thou canst live. Thou wilt be beyond reach of the worst sorrows, and wilt know how to purify grief. Thou wilt hear better the sounds from that city which is before thee; and the perfections thou hast learned to keep in thine eyes will be like light from the city, forming a little chambered space about thee and moving with thee.

Another way to believe in perfection, is to help make it. O very good, very worthy and valuable appear to our eyes the good things we have helped to build up! When devoutly we have endowed anything with our earnestness, our labor, our thoughtfulness, all or many of our virtues, perhaps, combining in work,—then the object shows to our eyes mainly its great and glorious traits. Little blemishes sink from sight, or if not from sight, from mind. The high and fine qualities seize us, and create a blessed satisfaction. Grumblers are idlers. The critics



who are but fault-finders are languid beholders of other persons' labors. Whoever helps to make the world beautiful and gracious, will find it very beautiful and very gracious indeed. Clouds of perfection will cover the earth, as if all life were a morning, and all experience a dawn of light. This is the same however cramped the lot be, even though we work in house-service or shop-service, or live in a little corner of humblest cares; for if you open a room fully to the sun-light, it is as much sun-lighted as all out-doors. The chamber is then a piece of the sun-suffused heavens, and witnesses of them. Great world-helpers have been great world-lovers. What they long and labor to help they behold so over-shadowed with perfection as to be worth all devotion. The world looks rich, the earth beautiful, the heavens worshipful and humanity glorious to such. I speak of Vincent De Paul, Montefiore, Mrs. Fry, Florence Nightingale, Octavia Hill, John Howard, Peter Cooper, Garrison, Pasteur, and many other persons as devoutly great, whether pushed forward into men's sight or hidden in lowly lot. To these souls comes knowledge of the Perfect.

Here now are four ways of coming to think of Perfectness—that we look and see the glory and beauty of Creation, that we delight in our fellow-men by looking on the march of mankind and by knowing the good qualities of those who live with us, that we rejoice in perfectness of human love, and that we try to bring about goodness and make a fair garden around us. For if we do these things, we shall know that it is indeed a garden in which we walk and work; and God will “walk in the garden,” as of old.

Now consider how needful it is that we should have this thought of Perfection and hold to it. Without it, we were as in a waste of waters, having forgotten whence we came, nor knowing whither to go or by what star to steer. But O! to know our home that it is the Perfect, and to know that we are but on a voyage of discipline, and that we shall come to our home, and that we have the nature of that home in us by our love of it and mindfulness of it, and that we may visit it continually in thought and faith, and by knowledge of its image in the goodness around us! What a stay and joy, what a mighty strength and health and hope is that faith and thought, the Perfect. Here we are

placed in imperfection, yea, and often sadness of imperfection, sad traits, lonesness, losses, wrong suffered—which is bad, wrongs done—which is worse, weakness, pain, disappointment, struggles, failures, fallings, risings but to fall again, faintings and staggerings, fears, sorrows, sins. Yes; but with them, many helps too, joyful things, beautiful and gracious, if we will keep our eyes open to see them and know that they are good. And best, brightest and strongest of all is that divinity within us, the thought of Perfection. That thought makes every joy great by showing us what the joy comes of, and it lifts us above all the wrong and strain and strife, or rebukes us if we stay in them, and gives us the steadiness of the thought of Eternal Quietness, the Perfectness of Law and Life. O! 'tis the heart's need that the hymn sings,—

“ Make it mine  
To feel, amid the city's jar,  
That their abides a peace of Thine,  
Man did not make and cannot mar.”

This peace and power we have by the thought and faith that there is the Perfect One, yea, and his Perfection spread out, however we toil yet in the transient and unfulfilled. A Shepherd once kept his flocks and herds in a poor pasture, and a traveler made light of the land and told the man 'twas but a rocky and wretched place. “Not so,” said the Shepherd, “there be stones enough, to be sure, and the sheep must browse well to make their wool; but it is not wretched for all that, for this country has a great King.” “A King!” quoth the traveler, “Ay, but his court and city are far enough away from you, poor fellow.” “Why, thus it is, Sir,” answered the Shepherd, “So long as I know there is the King and the Court, I am happy; and if you like to listen to this pipe, Sir,” quoth he, “I will show you that I can play the King's song, though the pipe be homely enough and made from yon scrub of an Elder.”

It is needful to us, yea, the life of life, the strength of strength, the joy of joy, to have hand-hold of the Perfect, and be with it, child-like. There is no peace for us but with the thought of Perfection; and with this, there is no war. We may be carried any whither and live in any place, in any bare and hard place whatever, and yet with the faith of the Perfect in us,



and the knowledge, like to the Shepherd's, that God is, we shall be rich and strong. And now behold again, for this needful faith, what angels come to minister to us, that we may learn the faith and be blest. First comes the sublime beauty of earth and sky—a saffron-winged angel with head-bands of stars, yea, and a voice of music, singing knowledge of land and sea and living creatures and fiery heavens. Then comes mankind, that is such “a piece of work,” “noble in reason, infinite in faculty, in form and moving express and admirable, in action like an angel, in apprehension like a god”—truly an august minister, proclaiming Perfection by the concourse of all peoples in the march of man and by the gentle and sweet goodness or great heroism of humble persons who live with us. Then comes human love—and blest is any one if this angel abide with him,—making such music on the thousand-stringed harp as is a symphony named Perfection. Then comes the best and most clear-voiced of the angels, albeit very lowly-voiced and with meek face,—our own good deeds and simpleness of heart. For if we love the good, the true, the fair, and try to bring it about, we shall have sight of the Infinity, Perfection and Eternity of Righteousness. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see God*.”



## ABIDING GOD'S TIME.

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"Abide under the Shadow of the Almighty."—PSALM 91, 1.

The Shadow of the Almighty,—a beautiful thought!—as if Divinity stretched forth over the earth like an adumbration! or as if the earth with its skies, atmosphere, garniture of clouds and pomp of stars, were a semblance of Divinity, the Shadow of God.

But where, then, must the Shadow of the Almighty be? Surely where the earth is, and always there where the earth is. For this trundling globe cannot roll out of the Shadow of God, and again roll into it. Can we think of the Shadow of the Almighty as stretching over a part of the earth's path, but from another part absent? or as striping the earth's orbit, if so I may speak, so that the earth rolls through alternate bands shadowed and unshadowed, now in the Shadow of God and now again out of it? Surely we cannot think or imagine after that manner; no, but that always the earth is in the Shadow of the Almighty, and that the Presence always covers the earth where it is.

In this Shadow the text says we shall abide. But where can we abide but on the earth where it is, and where on the earth but on this part of it where we are? and in what moment but in this present hour of morning or noon or evening or night which now is on this portion of the earth? The present instant is in the Shadow of the Almighty. This hour is the Shadow of Eternity. And all that herein is, all the assemblage of things, all the joys and pains, beauties, glories, grandeurs, all small and all great, all motions, circles, attractions and mysteries and powers, are the Shadow of the Almighty. Therefore to abide under the Shadow of the Almighty is only to know where we are, and to have a religious sense of *abiding* where we are, to make *our home* herein and to be at one in spirit with all the things that

inhabit around us; and to find no fault, but do our duty with piety, counting every humble duty stately and holy, since it is in the Shadow of the Almighty, and has being and commandment from God.

This is my subject in this sermon, that we ought to abide God's time, and know that we are in his Shadow, and take up whatever is by our side in that Presence, and hasten not, and despise nothing nor throw anything away, and be not filled with ambitions for proud things, but take all duties reverently; because all things are overshadowed with God.

A poet\* has enshrined this piety in verse. The first stanza of the poem runs thus:—

"If I were told that I must die to-morrow,  
                                     That the next sun  
 Which sinks should bear me past all fear and sorrow  
                                     For any one,  
 All the fight fought, all the short journey through,  
                                     What should I do?"

This question of the poet is religious. It touches that piety which lights up the present moment and shows the passing instant divine. What shall we answer to the poet's question? If we had to meet it, if we knew that to-morrow we were to die, what would be our answer? What should we do to-day? Let us try to answer the question, and then I will give you the poet's answer.

Now we know that, as the future throws its shadow to the present, so also it casts forward an *effect* on the present. I mean that we cannot act to-day if we know that one thing is to happen to-morrow, as we shall act if another thing is to occur. We must govern our actions in part by foresight, for this is simple wisdom. If we know an earthquake is to happen to-morrow, surely we shall conduct ourselves in one way, but in another way if we know that a bright and gala festival is to be celebrated. Therefore, if, as the poet conceives, we knew we were to die to-morrow, no doubt our actions to-day would sort with the knowledge, so that we should act not quite the same as if we knew we were to sing or dance to-morrow evening. We should not prepare for that voyage out of sight into the illimitable sea as we should make ready for a pleasure trip in a coasting yacht. Yet,

\* Susan Coolidge.

though it be granted that thus we should make some difference in behavior if we knew we were to die to-morrow, still there is a deeper sense in which we should make no difference at all, but seek to act the same whatever our knowledge of any thing to betide; because the present moment is the same, and this day is not made the less of what it is to the eye of duty or religion by anything that the morrow will bring when it comes. Therefore, though the knowledge of the sober fact of our departure being so near (I say sober fact, not miserable nor frightful, but only serious, as many a joy is serious)—though, I say, the sense of this soberness close at hand might add to the day's duties some tasks of preparation, some letter to be writ, last arrangement to be made, directions given, kind words said, advice offered, or exhortation or persuasion or messages, yet these were but duties added; and if time served for all the common duties of the day beside, then there they would be waiting for us with all their customary warrant. Therefore if the mother, the father, the brother or sister, or son or daughter, knew they were to die to-morrow, what should they do? What but go on with all the kind and gentle duties of the day as much as might be? They should cook the food, lay the table, draw the water. They should spread meat and drink. They should call the household. They should invite the guest. The meal should be cheered. Smiles should be given. Conversation should be made. They should go to their business. They should direct their affairs. They should sit at their desks. They should buy and sell. They should clothe and teach the children, direct them, sooth their sorrows, cure their pains, send them to school, welcome them back. The floor should be swept. The flower-beds should be watered. The blossoms should be gathered. The rooms should be garnished. The lamps should be trimmed. They should direct manufactures. They should govern their mills. They should dispatch and forward, receive and store away. They should return at evening and sit down in their home. They should break bread and give thanks. They should keep the study hour, reading the historian, the poet, the Bible. These things they should do the same if they knew they were to die to-morrow. For what is to happen to them to-morrow has no effect on the beauty, dignity, and duty of these offices to-day or on the claims of

others that they should do these offices, and "occupy" in the world, though it be but for one more day—as Abraham Davenport said, under the lowering night setting in at high noon, that he knew only his Lord's commands to occupy till he came, and so called in the candles, saying, "Let God do his work, we will see to ours."

Here I can but think of the aged; for they perforce in their daily living must answer one way or another the poet's question. They can look but a little forward on this earth, so little that they may be said to know they are to die to-morrow. And what should they do? What but go on day by day as all their lives they have done if they have lived well. Richter says that "what makes old age so sad is not that our joys cease, but our hopes." But this I think not true and helpful, nay, an untrue and not religious saying. And I like no better Dr. Johnson's remark, that age is "the period, alas, when our chief happiness is drawn from memory of the past"; and equally I think our own poet fails when he says, "How far the gulf stream of our youth may flow into the arctic region of our life where little else than life itself survives." Little else than life? What a saying! Why not little else than thought, little else than man, than earth and heaven and God? *Little else than life?* Nay, nay, there is an impiety in the phrase. I find a saying of Joubert that is nobler—"Old age takes from the man of intellect no quality save those that are useless to wisdom"; and Auerbach has a beautiful simile, "The silver-leaved birch retains in its old age a soft bark; there are some such men." Little else than life, forsooth! Why, this has a glorious meaning, if we will understand, namely, that age is life stripped of weight, like an army that has flung away its baggage and subsists on the rich products of its line of march. And now the end is close at hand, the sea-coast but a little way beyond a hill-brow and belt of green; the march is near its end. To-morrow it will be finished. What should age do? Why, march on the same to-day as yesterday. What should it do but human duties, waking, serving, thinking, making, loving, and sleeping, and all in peace, and nothing with any fever of expectancy, and everything with willingness of mind for the morrow, for the end of the march at the sea?

In fine, then, the truth is the same for all, for one in the



glow of youth or the strength of mid-age, if he knew he were to die to-morrow, and for the aged who knows that his day already is long drawn out and must expire; and the truth is this, that we should go straight on with the simple duties of every day under the Shadow of the Almighty, because these duties are divine and are appointed us, and we should know their divinity and do them. It is in this simple way that the poet answers the question, thus:—

“I do not think that I should shrink or falter,  
     But just go on  
 Doing my work, nor change nor seek to alter  
     Aught that has gone;  
 But rise and move and love and smile and pray  
     For one more day.

And, lying down at night for a last sleeping,  
     Say in that ear  
 Which hearkens ever: Lord, within thy keeping  
     How should I fear?  
 And when to-morrow brings thee nearer still,  
     Do thou thy will.”

But what if we knew we were to live a long time? The poet asks this question, thus:—

“But if a wondrous hand from the blue yonder  
     Held out a scroll,  
 On which my life was writ, and I with wonder  
     Beheld unroll  
 To a long century's end its mystic clue,  
     What should I do?”

Well, and if we knew we were to live a hundred years, as the poet says, what then? How would our lives be altered by this knowledge? What should we do then? What answer can there be again but that we must go on “day by day” to take up what God lays at our threshold to be lifted and carried into our house, or lifted and carried somewhither else, to do the tasks that God brings to our hands, to go in the paths that God opens to our feet? For whatever we find at our threshold or whatever comes to our hands or whatever paths open, these fall not to us by chance nor come with wings of their own, but God brings them and sets them before us, and every one of them is his before it is given to be ours, and every one carries divine command. If we are to live a day, the commandment of God and whatever

task he brings to us, are not belittled; and if we live one hundred years, the commandment of God and whatever task he brings to us are not made greater. For naught can be added and naught taken away when God hath spoken. Therefore if, as the poet saith, the scroll be let down with our destiny for a century writ on it, this day's task is no more mine to refuse than it was before, and no greater nor more important, neither any less; but it is God's gift and his command, and all is said. Therefore 'tis the same if we were to live a century of days as if only one day, that we should go on the same; that with deft attention the food should be cooked and the table with clean service spread; that we should draw wholesome water for bright ewers; that meat and drink should be laid with comely order, the household called to the health-making viands, the guest summoned and with kind hospitality regaled; that the meal should be cheered with bright smiles offered, and conversation sweeter even than bread that nourishes the body and oil that makes glad the face of man; that forth we should go to the business of the day at shop or hall; that wide affairs should be ordered well and we at desks sitting direct a multitude of things till they move in serviceable order; that we should seek in full markets what to buy and again in other waiting marts what to sell; that little children should be arrayed with comely modesty and taught a useful knowledge; that the sorrows of childhood, keen for little hearts, should be soothed and their pains or hurts of body be cured by kind medicaments, and they be turned forth to school in the morning with love, and with a like love welcomed back; that we should cleanse the floors till they be fit pathways of health; that we should sprinkle the beds of flowers, being to them a providence of rain; that we should cull the blossoms wherewith to garnish our rooms; that the lamps should be trimmed to be like little suns on our tables; that vast manufactories with their whirling wheels and prodigious engines should be directed, and marvelous patterns and webs be designed for the looms of mills; that we should despatch far and wide over the earth by mighty ships, and again receive and unload and store in sky-reaching warehouses; that again in the evening we should come back to our home and sit down therein and break bread and give thanks; and then forget not but studiously bethink us of our mind's needs

whereto the historian, the poet and the prophet minister. Like as if we knew we were to live but a day, so if we knew we were to live a hundred years, these things would carry the same import from God. And this is the answer of the poet:—

“What could I do, O, blessed Guide and Master,  
Other than this—  
Still to go on as now, not slower, faster,  
Nor fear to miss  
The road, although so very long it be,  
While led by thee?”

We *must* abide God's time. For we cannot hasten anything before his time, however we try. This is one sense of abiding. But this is to abide *united in spirit*, laggard, unwilling, clashing, withstanding, mutinous. But we *may* abide. This is the *religious* sense of abiding. Here come in will and heart, by whose virtue we abide freely and joyfully, “not like the quarry-slave at night, scourged to his dungeon.” This is a waiting with submissiveness, trust and unity of spirit, that would not alter God's time.

The Bible often has this thought. David said to Solomon, “Serve God with a *willing mind*.” Paul writes, “If there be first a *willing mind*, it is accepted”; and in another place, “In preaching the gospel I have nothing to glory in, for I am under a necessity to do so; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel. *If I do so willingly, I have a reward. But if unwillingly, still the stewardship has been laid upon me.*” Aurelius says nobly, in a like spirit: “He who flies from his master is a runaway. But the law is master, and he who breaks the law is a runaway. And also whoever is grieved or angry or afraid, he is dissatisfied because something has been or is or shall be of the things which are appointed by Him who rules all things. And He is law, and assigns to every man what is fit. That man, then, who fears or is grieved or is angry, is a runaway.”

It is for us to *work*; then after the working to say, “I have striven to do my part. Now, my God, do thine in thine own time.” But we must *work*. For only work is *believing* in God and *living* with God. Idleness is beggary toward God.

That we *must* abide God's time, whether we be dragged and whipped to it, or go to it with willing piety, doing his commandments by the way and not stormy or rebellious with wishes and

passions—that we *must* abide his time, I say, appears in this, that we cannot see ahead, or do any thing to alter or mould what is coming, otherwise than by humble, self-forgetful, dutiful work in this present moment. We know not whether to-morrow we die, or after many years. And this is well. What could we do with foresight? This the poet says in this stanza:—

“I may not know ; my God’ no hand revealeth  
 Thy counsels wise ;  
 Along the path a deepening shadow stealeth,  
 No voice replies  
 To all my questioning thought, the time to tell ;  
 And it is well.”

This circumscription of us, that we cannot see ahead, simply brings this moment into heavenly import. It is shown divine, and God indwelling. This instant is a sight of him. Yea, and a perfect knowledge and sight of him according to our being and our power now to see or know. And if ever we be greater in being and in power to see and know, still it will be sight and knowledge of this present instant in which God lives with infinity. Who can drag back the past to change it? Who can drag forward the future to hasten it? The past has left its power and impress here: the future forecasts its piety here. They empty into this *now*, from behind and before. All that has been and all that is to be for us hangs on this, that now we have what we have, and that this is divine. Therefore what piety is there but to take this, and to know it is divine, and to go on with it humbly and faithfully, and yet with exultation that we are children of such a covenant? What piety is there but to take this day so divinely that we could do no differently in it, whether knowing we were to die to-morrow or informed we were to live a hundred years? Yea, how can we dare to edge in our own will, and threaten, storm or complain to the heavens? How know we all the things that hang on one thing, that were shaken if aught were altered at our bidding or wrung from a vexed heaven by our impious prayers? O, how glorious the heavens! how quiet the stars! how beautiful and holy their array and order, like the progression of a hymn of worship! How dare we froth on them with our mouths? How can we break boldly and twist their rays by unwillingness and pride which make our

hearts bad and misshaping reflectors? How can we complain? How can we despise our duties and be fain to throw them off, where the heavens hang over? "All things are implicated with one another," says Aurelius, "and there is hardly anything unconnected with any other thing; and this bond is holy."

Friends and brethren, this truth that we have been looking at, that has been put into my mouth for you, is simple religion. We have but to go on where a path shows. One step at a time, is religion. For the moment and place, that one step is the whole of religion. That step always is a plain one. *Seldom indeed we know not what to do the very next moment.* 'Tis the moment after the next that perplexes us; but the next step is plainly before us. For if we know not what thing to do, this is God's command to wait. Waiting is then the next step. It is a great step, often trying the soul to its depths. It is very hard *to wait* with piety. But God's time is the right time; and the time that is and that comes is God's time, nor is this too soon nor that too late, while we do our part faithfully "day by day," under the Shadow of the Almighty. And thus the poet says, in the last stanza of the poem:—

"Let me keep on, abiding and unfearing  
           Thy will always,  
 Through a long century's ripening fruition  
           Or a short day's;  
 Thou cans't not come too soon; and I can wait  
           If thou come late."





## THE FULL BUSHEL.

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“Four pecks make a bushel.”

A strange text, but I hope an honest one. 'Tis sure that it states a fact—a great virtue in a text. But possibly also it may be found a sort of sturdy Jacques, “full of matter” touching common life. It came before me thus: Two young gentlemen attended my preaching once on a time and listened to the sermon. I know not the exact time, nor what I said in that sermon; perhaps they also remember it not. There is nothing remarkable in these facts. After the sermon, the young gentlemen went forth like others of the congregation, and talked on the way, like the disciples going to Emmaus. I trust there is nothing remarkable in their talking awhile of the discourse they had heard. But the substance of their talk was noteworthy; for one said to the other: “I like to be told frequently that four pecks make a bushel.” Now this was intended as a critical remark. It was supposed that the sermon had fallen short of the worth of the valuable fact that four pecks make a bushel. I mean not that I had dared deny that a bushel is four pecks, or had maintained aught unsorting therewith; but that I had not said anything of half so much moment to human beings as the fact or the statement that four pecks make a bushel. My sermon had been too remote, the young gentleman believed, from daily life in which the bushel is so valuable.

When this speech was told me, I saw much wisdom in it. As a critical remark, indeed, it may be overrated easily. For, as you know very well, I look on thought as a duty. I think young gentlemen and persons of all ages should like to be led to think sometimes, even if the elements of arithmetic be not the subject. I believe in the inspiring and helping power of a noble

and high thought, when it descends out of the heavens like a dove, or like a great storm, or like lightning. I believe in knowledge. It is quite plain to me that he will love the earth and the creatures on it best who knows most about the unfathomable life thereof, and the motions that manifest it. I think it well for the pulpit to try to help men to be reasonable. The first steamboat that ever was made was set upon and broken to pieces by a number of ignorant watermen, and no other was built for a hundred years. Suppose, now, that the schoolmaster had instructed those dear wooden-heads regarding the nature and value of that steamboat, and that the priest had roused in them a reverence for human thought and a wise forbearance in matters whereof they were ignorant. That little vessel would have found the open sea. It has been remarked that no one can say or imagine what differences in empires, in arts and manufactures, and in all the motions of human society we should be witnessing now. Besides, whatever be the value of knowledge and thought, it is right that all kinds of persons should have a share of consideration. As many persons *do* find joy in thinking, those whose heads limp too much for that exercise must stand by the wayside occasionally, and see the robust pleasure with which sound parts will climb a hill.

Therefore, be it said, the young gentleman's saying is not of profound critical value. Notwithstanding, it is wise, and I write this sermon on purpose to follow that counsel and to say over to you many times that four pecks make a bushel. For in truth it is impossible to say duly what an important fact this is, or with what profit we may remind ourselves of it continually.

The first thing that siezes the mind in this matter is the precept not to expect more than four pecks to the bushel; for, as four pecks make a bushel, so by no means can we get more out of a bushel than the four pecks. This, alas! seems a very hard lesson for human creatures to learn. The world appears full of people striving to get more out of their bushel than the exact four pecks which they have put in. This is really a matter of profound ethical philosophy, so deep indeed that few understand it. However often the truth may be set forth, people do go on just the same in their strange efforts to find more than the four pecks, just as even at this moment many sorry heads are dream-

ing after a perpetual motion, though it has been proved a folly ten thousand times.

One of the best expressions of this philosophy was uttered 1800 years ago, in the Sermon on the Mount. There it is stated that all things bear their own natural fruit, that everything has its own peculiar return and reward, of which it cannot fail; but that we must not expect also the returns belonging to other things. For thus I paraphrase the terse language of that great sermon. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye must look to men only for your reward. For the act then is done for renown among them; and this ye will have. But ye will have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. There is an exact return that belongs to just that act, and they have that precise return. But there is a better alms, which is done when thou lettest not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, so that the alms are in secret; and these alms have another reward, which comes from the Father, who seeth in secret and will give the return. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, think not that they gain nothing by this act; nay, they gain its own exact reward, just its own impartial measure of return in the praise of men and in a sounding reputation. But there is a better way. When thou prayest, go into thy closet and shut the door and pray to thy Father who is in secret. This secret prayer has its own reward which comes to thee directly. And the prayer in the street corners cannot bring the return that belongs to private devotion; neither can the secret prayer expect the returns which belong to the public exhibition in the synagogues. Neither the open nor the secret alms, and neither the private nor the ostentatious devotion shall fail of its own exact return, and neither of them can give what belongs to the other.

Turn your eyes on the world to see some of the examples with which it is crowded—examples of the unhappy struggle to

get by one way the reward which belongs to another way, to scrape out of a bushel more than its four pecks; an unhappy struggle indeed, for nature has set her face against such a business, and it comes to naught.

Everywhere you shall see men devoted with all the body and the soul to money-getting. They work hard, yea, often they toil very severely, for the laying up of great stores of possessions. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. The possessions they do obtain, and the power and the consideration in the world which go with these things they receive. But if such persons expect also to win admiration for their worth of mind, if they, having thought only of storing up matter, look to be possessed also of thoughts and knowledge, if they hope for noble company and rich companionship which come to sit down by the side of wisdom in the society of high minds and fecund thoughts, if they wish to surround themselves also with all these very choice things of life, then they are looking for more than the four pecks which are in the bushel.

But 'tis just so, too, if we turn and look the other way. For many persons there are who are so happy as to have room for the glorious exercise of mind. Either they have elected this blessed privilege, or they have been placed in its way by happy circumstance, or resolutely and nobly they wrest some time and strength for it from the toils of the day and the pleasures of the evening. And they have their reward. But they go grumbling that they have not also the other reward. They are not satisfied with the peace and joy, the serene intelligence, the clear depths of understanding in which nature is mirrored within them as the stars in a still pool—with these, I say, they are not satisfied, indeed they break them and destroy the calm peace which belongs to them because they go hungering and clamoring for the rewards which belong only to the stores of matter and not to the riches of mind. They wish to be wise and full of knowledge, and yet complain that with this they get not wealth also. They bemoan the poor returns which they get. Alas for them! I shut my eyes on them! they are scraping the bushel for more than its four pecks.

Others there are who seek only how to have pleasure, and know not what the great and blissful pleasures are. They waste

time in a giddy round of social business from which they glean few moments to think or even to feel, and indeed not enough to rest as they ought. They have their reward. The pleasures please, the dance or game or jest weaves its patterns like gay carpets on which light feet come and go or pretty wit plays its dazzles; and "such a hare is madness, the youth, to leap o'er the meshes of old age, the cripple," even though old age spread the mesh kindly, saying, "I hobble now because I did in my youth as you are doing!" But youth has its reward and is gay, bright and lissom. But sometimes a deeper chord is struck. The youth will sit entranced before some glorious eloquence of word or music or picture. For the first time, LIFE breaks on his eye, and it is seen to be a great deep sea. He will look up to some noble form borne on the breast of that life and tossed into the clouds by the heaving of that breast. He will be filled with a sincere reverence and sorrow before the eloquence, the grandeur of thought, the wideness of mind, and the great joys and independence that inhabit those heavens. He will envy that strength and beauty. But therein he is discontented with his bushel for holding only the four pecks which he has filled it withal.

Or again, there may be an unwise seclusion. Life is many-sided and rich in divers values. All are good, and particularly it is wise to come close to persons if we wish to keep life abounding in us and playing with a sweet rhythm on its shores. We see one person who is shut up in books; he is full of austere study; he applies himself in a cloister copying books into his head, as the old monks did on parchment. He has his reward. He will store up curious learning, science will unlock her treasures for him and history her riches. Yea, but if he expect also the powers of life and light, if he wish to know, or if he envy those who know, how a heart-beat feels when it strikes on another heart; if he look for the light of children's eyes to stream in at his window, then he expects more than four pecks, and with all his getting he has not got the understanding of the bushel.

You will meet many persons who are well satisfied with themselves. They are full of knowledge in their own eyes. They rejoice in their wisdom and wish no one to lead them. They understand not that humility which the Arabians enshrine



in a tale of a Calef who, being corrected by a wise man for an ungrammatical expression in Arabic, promptly ordered that the mouth of the scholar should be filled with jewels because of the benefit which it had conferred; neither do they remember that the least tincture of vanity shows that the mind cannot hold place with the first and grandest. But this satisfaction in self has its due reward. It is free from the pains of aspiration, from the pangs of a regretful ignorance, from the waste and burning of the fever to think and to do noble things worthy of the universe which has produced us and to drink of the fountains of everlasting beauty. All these pangs pass by and leave the self-contented soul calm and quiet. But if such a one expect also to learn, to grow, to improve, to do justice to the fire which burns in generous bosoms, to be gentle and considerate and careful not to encroach on the rightful freedom of another's will or mind, then he looks for too much in the bushel. He can take out only the four pecks he has put in.

You will see a selfish man. He has his reward. He can get and keep many things; he escapes much painful sympathy; he avoids much self-sacrifice. But very likely he wants to be loved, also; perhaps he groans at having no friends. This is merely foolish. He is trying to get more than four pecks in his bushel.

You will meet persons who take the great social step in life with no heart. The great social step is marriage. Whoever moves into that charmed circle without a companion the mere touch of whose hand is bliss, is torn to pieces by imps. Yet without regard to character or mind or love, to the stabilities of moral worth and a good heart shining in a clear eye, you will see an inheritance marry an inheritance, as men club funds for business; or, worse, if possible, a needy young man hunt out a fortune, like a luxurious bed, to lounge on it; or a girl take a husband who is unsound from the heart out and carries no mind behind his eyes, because he is rich. When a nobleman invited Coleridge to dine, he said, "I will send you my bill of fare." "Send me your bill of company," answered the poet. When two ask each other to that long entertainment at which they must sit and take life together, let them answer, "Tell me not what shall be on the table, but what you have in you for



company." There is a story of a young girl whose father urged on her a wealthy suitor whom she did not respect. He used the common arguments, not thinking for the moment of the wife whose daughter his daughter was, who lay asleep in the churchyard of the village home. But before the mother fell meekly asleep, she had left the diamond-drop of her womanhood in her girl.

"Father," she said, "have you a sovereign? give it me. How bright it is! and how heavy! it weighs very much in life, does, it not, Father? But why does it not speak to me?"

"Speak, my Child?"

"Yes, indeed, speak! Strange that something so mighty cannot speak! But perhaps it can think if it cannot speak, and walk and love and pray! it is so bright and shining! Can it do these things, Father?"

"What questions, Child!"

"But, Father, when I marry, I want somewhat that can talk with me, walk with me, think with me, love with me and pray with me. Until then, let me be only my Father's child."

Now, the law is plain. Four pecks make the bushel. If any one marry the sovereign, and expect also the joys of those things which the sovereign cannot do, he is raking for more in the four pecks of tinsel in the bushel.

But let these pictures pass by, as a panorama moves. The showman is tired of them, and in fact you may sit on a stone by any wayside and see hundreds of them. It is important to remember the one agreement in them all,—the unreasonableness of looking for more than four pecks in a bushel. Choose your ways of life and choose as men who mean to take the choice with all that it conveys. Remember simply that if you elect some things, you cannot have the reward of others, and that it is foolish and feeble to grumble at not having things the conditions of which you will not elect. You cannot be greedy and grab successfully, and at the same time be noble and distribute beautifully. You cannot be selfish and mean, and at the same time lovely and beloved. You must choose whether you will be a mere mill, giddy with the whirl of the grinding when there is grist, and giddy with the clatter when there is none; or whether you will be a well-informed and large-minded man. Be sure

simply that with whatever four pecks you fill your bushel, you will get nothing else out therefrom.

The second thing that strikes the mind touching this important science of the bushel, is this,—that as we cannot get more from a bushel than we have agreed to put in it, so we ought carefully to *give four full pecks for a bushel*. It will occur to you that this is the precept of common honesty. So it is. I hope indeed the honesty is very common. But what occurs to me now is that this is a very beautiful thing, this simple common honesty. The thoughts derived from the young gentleman's saying regarding the bushel lead us directly to a fine art. Consider. A customer wishes to buy something, be it food or cloth or shoes, or any other thing. The transaction is made. Exactly the equivalent is laid down in some other commodity or in the money which is the medium of exchange, and for that he receives exactly a full bushel of four pecks. It is done! What cleanness! what simplicity! what neatness! no loose ends or ravels appear, as in untidy work! all is complete, rounded, finished, symmetrical, as beautiful as a Greek face! Study that simple honesty. See how the social fabric glows by it. Look at it as an art, this matter of common honesty, a fine art. Think what an ignorant bungler he is who plots to give less than four pecks to a bushel. You perceive there is no art, no beauty, because nothing is finished. The act is involved in one long tangle and struggle with all other things. The mean deed is continually in the way, always tripping up some one, always half-showing its face, and then hiding again to peek out soon from some other corner. It becomes a source of disorder and doubt in everything. Beauty becomes impossible in its path, till that bushel of three and a half pecks is brought home and filled to the brim. If the chemist define dirt as matter out of place, what more natural than that ugliness consists in forms and things out of place. To give every one what belongs to him, that is, to put everything in its place, this is to make neatness, order, cleanliness, beauty. Dishonesty is the hideous dust and scattered implements of a room where carousal has been. Simple honesty is brimming with beauty. It becomes the face of a man. It makes him look clearly and straight into other faces. It makes the world good, glad, and graceful.

Finally, I see in this saying touching the bushel a glimpse of the value of the common precepts in morality and the common experience in religion. The common staples of the moral life—how satisfying they are, how good for the taste, digestion, and health! An excellent musician said to me, touching commonplace, “Remember that if a phrase be common, it is common because it is good.” So it is with authors. The greatest poets, those in whom human life is reflected most truly and grandly, are household names. Every one knows them and speaks of them. Only the foolish rake eccentric names out of obscurity as the touchstone of learning, or read and rend, like vultures, everything the press turns out. It is the common homely virtues, the daily experience, and the simple precepts voicing these, which are the fountains of life. I hold it bad to be a babbler of religion. Frantic experience-meetings or garrulous prayer-meetings and the noise of revivals are as profane, to my mind, as Babylonian rites. Between two or three let but a few words be said reverently touching the eternal mystery and the Great Name, and let silence follow. Sometimes the swell of emotion will rise like a great wave till it scatters its mist into the heavens and the stars drink it. ’Tis then like the ocean whose roar is not a chatter, but rests on deeps which bear up the sound, emitting none. But the sweet experience of daily gratitude and trust, the unspoken prayer which instantly is answered by a tide of will or endurance, the sudden thought of that Fatherhood of mystery which holds us like water-drops in a firmament, the peace amid difficulties, griefs, pains, disappointments, the simple patience and childlike kindness which disciplined natures bear about them, the simplicity, earnestness, fervor, love, forgiveness, repentance of every day—this is religion, common religion, sacred, serene and holy.

’Tis so with common morality and its precepts. They are the great things of life, and common because so needful. And the young gentleman wished them repeated; he wished to hear often that four pecks make a bushel. He was wise. It is well to tell the truth and it is wrong to tell untruths; even a little untruth is both wrong and mean. Be not siezed with too much wonder at this saying: I assure you it is quite true, and a very simple truth. It is well to be loving and gentle to your wife or

your husband, to be very tender to little children, to be kind to the unfortunate, to be chaste in act and speech, to be honest, to be faithful in friendship and true to your word in all things; it is well to be forbearing and forgiving, to return good for evil, to guard against spitefulness, to be generous in thought and deed, to try to help society on to a better state; it is well to be sober and temperate, to be cheerful and diffuse light about us. I assure you all these things are very true, and it is wise to say them over and over. But it will be wiser, and indeed a dawn of light and beauty like the creation sung by primeval poets, if we make these things as common in life as in words. These things, true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report—"if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think of these things."

"Had it been given me to write down my life  
Or only its beginning, but two lines,  
Upon a solid tablet of pure gold,  
How had I paused! how pondered o'er the task!  
Yet now, indeed, as children on their slates  
Write what is easily effaced, each man  
Writes with light hand but ineffaceably  
His life upon the heavy mass of days  
That towers behind us, dark, immovable,  
An up-piled cloudy wall of adamant,  
Infrangible, more solid than mere gold;  
He writes it, as a fate, on human hearts;  
He writes it on his own with iron pen!  
Then, writer! think, create, engrave with care."

## THE RICHES OF LIFE.

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“The earth is full of thy riches.”—PSALM CIV. 24.

This great and glorious psalm is one of the two or three places in the Old Testament in which riches has a wider and higher meaning than merely wealth or money. Indeed, the riches of life, or perhaps better I may say the riches of living, is rather a thought of the New Testament than of the Old. I have met, indeed, but one other passage in the Old Testament in which the word *riches* is applied to aught more than the having of material wealth, which is that good saying in Proverbs, “There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”

But the New Testament is full of this glowing thought of the riches of living, of the riches of mind, of the heart, of the soul. In Luke we have the parable of the rich man who thought within himself to pull down his barns and build greater, and heap all his fruits and his goods in them, and say to his soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry;” and, says the evangelist, when God shall require his soul of him this night, whose shall these things be that he has provided? Such is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. Like to this is the saying in the first epistle of Timothy, “rich in good works,” which the Apostle says must be our aim, that we be not lofty-minded, nor trust in the uncertain riches, but in the certain ones, which is riches in good works. So the Epistle of James says, “Hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith?” And again in the book of Revelation it is said that he



that is the First and the Last saith to the churches, "I know thy works and tribulations and poverty, but thou art rich." In Paul and the apostles this glowing thought of riches of life is far forth to the front. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, "The Lord is rich unto all that call on him;" and again in another place, "The riches of his goodness, forbearance and long suffering," cries the apostle; and in yet another place in the same letter, "The riches of his glory;" and the same expression occurs in the letter to the Ephesians. In another place in the Romans he says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." And in the epistle to the Ephesians we have these sayings: "Rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loves us," "The exceeding riches of his grace," "The unsearchable riches of Christ;" and in Colossians the apostle speaks of "The riches of a full assurance of the understanding, the full knowledge of the mystery of God." In the Hebrews it is said that the reproach of Christ, which is to say the reproach that men endured for his cause, "is counted greater riches than the treasures of Egypt;" and in Corinthians Paul writes, "For your sakes Christ became poor that ye, through his poverty, might be rich."

It is quite wonderful that thus the word *riches* comes into the New Testament alive with such a new and glowing sense, whereas in the old Hebrew scriptures it had but the common meaning of ordinary wealth. Let us take up this subject, let us look a little at the riches of living. This has been pressing on my mind and heart all this summer. How the subject crowds indeed! If I must try to speak of it in a little space, as I must, it seems like treating of history in a page, or reading some grand volume in an hour, or taking ten thousand miles of landscape on a canvas. And yet I bethink me that this last can be done *if we paint the heavens*; yea, and ten million miles. So we may speak in brief of the riches of living, if we take a high and heavenly scope, if we apply to the riches that are like the sky, and so bring a vast view into a small space.

The riches of life are Nature, Creation; again, Mankind; again, Experience of Ourselves. Or thus I may phrase these riches: The joy of observation and knowledge, the joy of love and liberty, the joy of labor and obedience. Let us speak of these in order.



First, look at Nature. This map unrolled before our wondering eyes—what a riches of life! what a splendor to walk in! To walk in it day by day, as we may, is riches of pleasure. It is a pleasant thing to go about, pleasant to look, listen, hear, to see or to smell. Pleasant, say I? I have be-thought me at some moments in this last jubilant flowering season that to walk about was glorious, like a king's progress. I can see from my window a lime kiln; soon I go by it; a tall column of black smoke rises from it. Even in the daylight I see a brush of red flame laboring with the smoke. After the smoke is gone, a delicate white mist ascends, draping the air. I pass some wood sawyers at work; I admire the large, keen teeth of the double-handed saw; and the smell of the cut wood is delicious, wholesome. I hear the hum and smell the clean flavor of a grist mill. I stand a long time admiring the whirling stone, snuffing the wholesome dust, handling the brown wheat. I look into the window of a swarthy place, where plow-shares are ground. A workman holds one on a movable frame; when he brings it against the huge stone, streams of sparks fly off like a comet's tail. I meet a boy full of brown health. What a sight he is, running down the hill to the west! His cap hangs on the back of his head, and the broad leathern visor is turned to the north star. I observe a squirrel sitting erect; I see that he has a black nut in his hand-paws, and another near by a piece of apple. Crosses my path a handsome white hen, with black marks on her back and wings; she has found a ripe, red tomato. I find a tree-toad in a well cover. I know how his voice sounds when he is in the tree. I see that he looks like a piece of breathing bark. I hear the locust spring his rattle at noon when the air is full of the delicious heat, and the frog and tree insects at night, more shrill than any human instrument can pitch a tone. At sunset I wait long, looking at the river, at the solemn palisades of rock rising until the western clouds cover them with golden drapery. In some places the river is smooth, in others covered with ripples. The trees far below those battlements make feathery shadows in the water long after they have melted into one black mass away up the slope. A star one hour high shoots a ray of light straight down into the water; it ends in sprays and sprinkles of light like a fountain in the air.

I hear many cheerful night-sounds in the coolness; I hear children playing and calling one another; I note dogs growling and baying in the distance; I hear a band of music; it ends a piece with a long, sweet tone and a *staccato* chord with a drum-beat; I hear the pretty voices of girls, talking and laughing; and a rapid step on the pavement sounds happy. Such are the things we walk among, even the little things, and each one of them full of beauty, of the riches of life. In the hundred and fourth Psalm, where I have chosen my text, the poet speaks of many of these things with a Hebrew's sense of majesty. He says: "God covereth himself with light as with a garment, and stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain;" he "lays the beams of his chambers in the waters;" the clouds are his chariots, and he walks on the wings of the wind. There are springs in the valleys which run among the hills; they give drink to the beasts of the field, and the wild asses are there quenching their thirst. The fowls of the heavens come and make their habitations and sing there among the branches. He causes grass to grow for the cattle, and herbs for the service of man. Near by are trees full of sap—the trees which he has planted—and to them come the storks, and other birds, and they make the fair trees their houses. The hills are covered with wild goats; and the moon riseth for his season, and the sun knoweth his going down. Darkness comes on, and the beasts of the forest creep forth, and the young lions roar after their prey. Behold, also the sea, the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, small and great beasts, the leviathan which has been formed to play therein, yea, and the ships that man hath made. And man goeth forth to his work and to labor until the evening.

If we look at man now as the Psalmist has looked, and see him among these other wonders, what riches to see and to note! Among all beauties, what beauty like the human body! The splendor of it, its superb and stalwart agility, its supple grace, its swiftness, its exercise, its endurance,—what equal to these? Then, too, the science of its structure, its anatomy, its science of health, of disease! The human voice is the most tender and exquisite of all vocal sounds, and sweeter than all instruments of music, being vibrant with soul. Also how dear it becomes

when 'tis the voice of a friend, being like a sweet song in itself, so full is it of feeling, so tender with the vibrations of love, or so reverberent with precious memories. The human face—what riches! what forcible light, like a sun! how exquisite its symmetry, how noble its power, how sensitive the mouth, how raptuous the eye, and how beautiful altogether! how sublime and tender the emotions that move on it! And the human hand, why this is the wonder of all creation, as well as one of the greatest beauties of the whole earth. Its mechanical perfection is the delight and astonishment of the philosopher, its form is the charm of the artist, its signs of character are marvelous; it is a tool, a weapon, a grace, a glossary of sign-language; its clasp is love, friendship, faithfulness, honor, protection. What riches of delight, of joy, are in the human body! And those of the soul in the body, the wonders of men's doing, the wonders that he hath made by employing his body on all the material frame about him! The acts, the inventions, the imaginations,—these glow like lamps in every village and hamlet, they fill our dwellings with marvelous utensils and conveniences, they clothe us with lovely fabrics, they make industry and cheerfulness to abound. The science, too, of all this wondrous army of things! I include the descriptive sciences, botany, zoology, geology, and the sciences of minerals, birds, shells, and the experimental sciences, properly called physics, mechanics, acoustics, optics, heat, electricity; also astronomy, which holds a radiant and unapproachable place of its own. What rapturous pursuits are these! what riches of living! what vistas of order, force, time, they open! what entrancing beauty in the grand and in the minute, when man in his soul takes his station and makes his body work, as we may say, on the infinite body. We sit reverently at the feet of those magicians whose wand is observation, whose spell is thought. Magicians? Nay, priests and prophets, who open to us these splendors, richer than all the mines of the East, and these marvels greater than Arabian imagination ever dreamed. Poetry, painting, music, sculpture, architecture, the drama, all are riches; all have such histories and such fullness that any one may be the subject of huge volumes, the long and deep study of a life-time.

These are the vessels by which beauty brings her loads of

graces or riches from that unknown country where they grow, to spread them in our cities, homes and lands. What a wealth! what riches of thought,—wonderful, inexhaustible!

The feats of the masters of language, of the poets who have known how to use syllables, of the learned men who have had wit to acquire the different tongues of the earth and with them do wonders of research into the condition and movements of the race long before the age of history, the aid of speech in the study of religions, the deciphering and rescuing of whole national histories from oblivion,—these are among the triumphs of human riches. Speech is such a thrilling, beautiful, masterful, wondrous function, that display of its history or nature or capacities, is great glory.

All this I see, I feel, I note about me. If you keep your minds and eyes and ears open for these things, you shall not take any walk, in what day or hour soever, but they shall come one on another, and then troops of them together, crowding on your soul. I look at faces. Each one hath a look, an art, a faculty, a place, a duty, a joy, a struggle, a wonder;—“what a piece of work!” The effect of going about much, if we will use our eyes, as we should if we were walking among riches to know them, is to behold such a panorama of great creatures, all about us, as must fill us full with the thought of the riches of life.

Let us not get used to these virtues, to be dull and dry among them. I knew a wise man who took by the hand a little maiden who was about to enter the solemnity of marriage, and taking her away for a little talk, he said to her: “My child, I give thee one counsel,—never get used to love! Be never used to it! If thou try hard, thou canst keep it a perpetual wonder.” What if we saw a man now indeed for the first time? How should we be quelled to our knees! And a star for the first time, creation widened at night? How should we burn with unutterable praise! And yet every morning we ought to awake as to a first time of men and things, and feel “how beautiful it is to be alive.” All is great and admirable, and very important, like a plainly-clad herald charged with matters of great moment. I can but exclaim with the poet:—

"I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars.  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the  
Wren.

And the tree-toad is a *chef d'oeuvre* for the highest.  
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of heaven.  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand points to scorn all machinery.  
And the cow crunching with depressed head, surpasses any statue.  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels."

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But turn now from nature to mankind. Man himself, our neighbors, our friends, and all the people that fill the continents, these are riches of life! How we are drawn and woven into the little circles of those that come near and very close to the heart! I call this second department of the riches of life, the joy of love and liberty. Why I speak here of *liberty* with love, I shall explain by and by. But now I will speak simply of the riches of the affections. Think of the array of them, and what they include, the things that centre in them and cluster with them. There is birth. What interest rests on the mystery of the assembling of that congress of qualities, which each one calls "I," and on its advent to this new earth! How strange the thought of that unfathomable depth from which we come, which seems to be all light beneath, but over it floats a drapery, a thin drapery of impenetrable darkness. We see the light through it. How impossible to admit the thought of a beginning. Yet there comes that little life, rising like a lily to the surface; and we know not how it is planted or rooted, or whence it rises to dance on the wave which, God grant, be a sunny wave unto it by our means. And round that little life the affections gather as it grows to childhood. How pathetic the helplessness of the little child as it grows! how tender its disposition! how ready to forgive! What answerableness lies on us to strive by patience, by prayer and watchfulness, to guard and lead well the little child! Oh, what riches given, of which we are the stewards!

So the child comes to youth. Then open the charms of life, that call either with a siren's voice or with an angel's, according to the ear of the young soul, whether tuned to heavenly or to earthly strains. Think of the choices then made—how



beautiful they may be! how sad! how radiant with life, how ghastly with death! This is the time when education is tested, when the influences of childhood, the father's precept, the mother's prayer, the example of both, the inheritance (we know not how far back), begin to grow into lilies or nightshade. Then draws on middle age. The affections have kept pace with the unfolding life; the riches of love come forth to meet the riches of experience. Now brims the cup of energy and activity; the body is fully ripe, the strength adequate to labor, to enjoy, to sorrow too. This is the time of mature and grave issues. Life sometimes is storms of passions that rage over the soul; but if the spirit can answer to the heavenly voice, those waves will be tipped with white, and toss a pure spray into the sky, and the farther upward to the stars will it go the mightier has been the surge. So, with the power and glory of mid-life, we come at last to the rounding down of old age from the hilltop—a moving theme. The affections gather around it with great riches. It is a resplendent sight if it be noble, and in all ages old age has loaned its silver to the tongues of sages and bards. A beautiful charm rests on the evening of a life well spent. A holy light, as of something both ending and beginning, hovers around it, a most wonderful beam, like the light in the west, which is evening-red to us, morning-red to those who live beyond. Age also grows very tender in love. The aged live in a benign, wide-reaching and beautiful love, founded sometimes in their own temptations, struggles, victories. Woe be to the old man who knows not the young, having forgotten his own youth!

And so come we to death. Nay, I like not the word; we come to *dying*. Dying is not death; nay, but an act of life. It is sure to come; it hastens on with every flying minute. Yet see how far it is from casting any shadow of fear or gloom on us. The affections, when it comes, stoop over it, as they stoop over naught else but a birth. But we enjoy heartily, we love dearly, nay, we dance, we sing, in gladness of heart; and all of it, every laugh, and look, shakes off trembling leaves into earth's warm lap,—a holy and lovely mystery; not dreadful, nor repulsive nor shocking, but mysterious.

All the way along this wondrous rich path, friendship



beams. Friend-love makes a great part of all full lives. It fills the days with love, with helpfulness; it keeps the earth full of company for us in many different corners where our friends live; it blooms as well in absence as in presence of our friends, yea, sometimes meseems it blooms better; for when we get far away from one, it is very hard to think of his blemishes. Friendship is a perfect confidence, a mutual trust in trouble and sympathy in joy; also a source of warning, of guidance, of knowledge of ourselves. And sometimes this friendship—for that is the right way of it—blooms to what we call peculiarly love, that exquisite, delicate sentiment which draws two persons together into the most mysterious and holy of all unions. It is a mighty friendship, when perfected, with somewhat added. I may challenge any one to tell me what that something is. It is elemental. Loving should rest on character, on moral worth and intellectual companionship; and over all these comes that somewhat from heaven which is like light in the day at high noon, irradiating everything, but blinding us if we look at it too directly. Such love is stable and glorious.

With this comes on the wondrous union of marriage. So enters marriage into all life that it is the theme of all stories and poems, the one union of lives of which all else seems prediction. No words can say too much of the riches or of the sanctity of that union, its supreme joy, or its great misery, according to our power to rejoice or to sorrow. In this wondrous riches, to keep them, the rule should be to throw away naught and let naught lie unused, but gather every possibility of companionship, cherish every little point where association, fellowship, appreciation, respect, admiration may quicken. Seek for them. This will enlarge the extension of the union till it shall cover the whole domain of life with a companionship which is strong inspiration and joy, encouraging each to the best things to be done and rewarding each with the dearest praise to be had. Nay, what other praise may be sought? None, none. The admiration and praise of the bosom friend are the only lauds that ever one ought to seek. With this, the work should be spread broadcast, without thought of the return of it.

Such are the affections. So manifold, so creative, so truly of God, such a riches of the heart in life!

O divine Love, O great riches of life, that fillest heaven and earth like light, "offspring of heaven, first-born"—nay, not first-born, nor second, nor at all, not, indeed, having being in time but time in thee—uncreated, infinite, eternal Love, how dost thou lift human hearts into the heaven where thou art! Nay, I would say rather, how dost thou make us to see that this heaven surrounds the earth which floats midway of it! and never was it otherwise, and love bathes it in providence, and yet shall in bliss! Like water which is all one everywhere, so that whether it be a mountain spring, or torrents of rapids and waterfalls, or a calm running river whose motion is too deep to be seen, still it is one with the ocean and riseth therefrom, and goes back thereto to rise again, and in its circle refreshes all things, plant and man, and beast and creeping thing, so art thou, O Love, which art one everywhere; and whether in child's heart, or man's, or woman's, and whether in one or in a nation when a million hearts beat like one, or whether consorting with knowledge, or with the untaught—yea, whether even with gentle and delicate souls, or with the rough, the rude—yea even with the savage in the forest, and besides these, even in the hearts of good dumb beasts that are faithful and feel thy pangs and joys, O Love, in all these thou art one with the Infinite Life, the eternal, the all-holy, the Almighty, and risest therefrom and goest back thereto, and again risest, coming by death and life, by sleeping and waking, by morning and evening, and in thy circles filling the springs of joy, refreshing man and beast and creeping thing, yea, and the very plants which love will not let die of thirst; and dost bless the dreams of youth, the joy of mid-age, the peace of the old, the birth by which we come, and again the birth by which we go—the cradle, the school, the store, the bed, the grave! O Love, what dost thou not hold! O, Love, what dost thou lack! Naught, naught, naught! Thou hast all heaven, since thou art of Him whose abode is all the heavens which he hath inhabited eternally. Love, thou canst make this earth a blooming garden, full of such flowers as never yet were seen; for these blossoms shall be joy, and peace, and grace, and praise, and thanks. Love, thou dost take the nearest persons, those that belong to the heart that loveth them, they that make the home and live close together,

thou takest them, O Love, and being near, thou makest them nearer, and being alike, thou makest them more alike and drawest them together till they seem as one; and having joys under one roof, thou dost bring the joys to be but as in one soul under one roof, and all the sorrows to be as in one heart! This thou canst do, O Love, and blest is life when thou hast done it. Then canst thou reach out, O thou heavenly Being, Love, thou canst reach out to them that are afar, and to them that are unlike; and as thou dost gather the near and the like into one, so canst thou call the far till they come near, and the unlike till they become similar; and we shall know what those afar are feeling because they have come near, and the beats of their hearts strike on ours as waves from coast to coast. And thou makest us to know, O Love, what thoughts rise in others, though unlike and speaking another tongue and in other labors working, different from ours, because thou hast made us—thou alone, O Love—akin in soul, and hast drowned the unlikeness, and hast gathered, as of one blood, all that speak and feel, yea, and that feel but speak not, the dumb creatures and the creeping things! And when thou hast done this, O Love, and they that are near have become as one, and they that are far have come near, then dost thou take all as one family into a temple, yea, and show them that their home is a temple, and all the riches of the temple thou showest them, and dost lead them all together into the glory of the joy of the worship of Love, of One, our Father, our Strength and our Redeemer. O Love, show us this holy thing! Show us what thou art; teach us, make us humble that we may learn. Let us fall down and hear while thou dost speak; and then lift us, O Love, to lead us to peace, to kindness, to long-suffering, to thought, not of ourselves, but of others, that joy may live in the earth as is natural, and that we shall not be shut in our own hearts but know what others feel. This thou canst do, O Love!

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So have I spoken of the riches of life which nature is by its great abundance of glories to see and hear and know; also of

the riches which our fellow-beings are unto us, by deep joys and wealthy marvels of affections, which can do such wondrous works and give such great blessings. Now I come to speak of the riches of life which each man may be unto himself. This is the third point of my sermon, that there is great riches in our exercise and experience of ourselves, which is the same as to say in labor and obedience. This is because we are such creatures as we are, so wondrously framed, with such organs, powers, thoughts, with such a place and function. In truth I would say *any* creature is riches unto itself. Yes, for to live is riches. To have life, if it be no more than as the ciliæ sweep currents of pleasant food-bearing water into a polyp's mouth, is riches. How much more, then, to know that we live, to look forth on life and see it, to behold other creatures living, and hence to reflect the more on our own life and the manner of it, how much more is this great riches! "For friends and brethren's sake, I will never cease to say" that life is very riches in itself. No, however some may speak of woes and ills, or however, doing much worse, some call life itself a woe or ill, a naught, a failure, an idle or wanton sport or jest, or grim jeer of fate, I will not cease to say life itself is riches, the riches of God, the wealth of the heavens, glorious, divine and holy. What great riches unto ourselves, then, may we be in this riches of life, being so rich a creature in this riches as to know it and think of it, and look forth on it!

Our riches unto ourselves, as I have said, is our experience and exercise with ourselves in the two ways of labor and obedience. Every lot has somewhat in it to do and somewhat to bear. Men can do naught more than to labor and to bear. Either to labor or to bear is obedience. Therefore all our riches unto ourselves is in obedience, in what way soever we be led or commanded. And this is right and as it must be; for the Creator is the riches of creation. God is the riches of riches, and our obedience to him must be the only riches that we become unto ourselves.

But now take labor by itself. What a great and good riches of life work is! Sometimes it has "a frowning brow for its disguise," for labor seems as if it would fain steal on us and take us slowly to its heart, as a friend does in the making of a new

friend, and let us learn gradually what a riches we have gotten when we think it but a lumpish slag or dross, mayhap.

Yes, labor thus often disguises its lovely face, and always duty does thus; for each is so very sweet that its sweetness seems guarded and hedged about by nature, and not to be had at first taste of it, but only after the struggle to open it and explore it; which is only to say in plainer phrase, that *first steps cost, and beginning; always are hard*. But nevertheless labor is a grand and noble riches, worthy for a man to cherish, and to be known by a man to be riches.

Work is a riches by what it makes, or what it guards, for us. This I speak of first as the lowest way in which work is riches, that it brings things contributing to us, things both useful and healthful, and brings wealth to us, for labor subdues the earth to us. The eye, the ear, takes in great riches, glorious and great riches; but the hand must work on the substance of these glories to subdue it, and to make some of the splendors at will too, to join them in pairs and fours and tens, and in troops, to make them serve and enrich us with their marvels of qualities and properties and powers. Therefore labor is riches by the riches it brings unto us. "Industry need not wish," said Franklin; no, for it gets; it is the power that puts the wish into shape of fact; it is the capital that grows other riches, like fruits on a tree. But here again we run on the truth that labor *itself* is riches. This is a truth so shining that it cannot be hidden, but shows itself everywhere by the glow around it. "Industry need not wish"; no, truly, it is too rich in itself to be wishing. It will have an aim, a great aim, mayhap, a far and mighty aim, that shall stay distant a long time, and come nearer, hovering, looming, very slowly; but labor will be content the while and see the aim as a grand, a heartening, a towering splendor, like mountains before the traveler. Doth the traveler bewail the road to the hills while their glory is before him all the way, changing and looming, and cloud-clothing itself, and again undrapping and glowing in the sun at every step of him? Nay, not more does manly labor bemoan itself in wishes. It is too rich in itself. It is life at high powers. What should it be wishing? Look therefore no longer at the hand of labor by which it gathers things, but at the soul of it, and see that it is great riches of life in



itself, as I have said, and somewhat to be thankful for, and taken as no curse, but as a blessing and wealth from God. Labor is self-unfolding, and that is great riches. Is anything more wealthy to you than to grow? Has any man aught that is so great riches to him as himself? If then he grow and unfold and flourish, his greatest wealth is rolling up. This is what work does. It makes us more; it unfolds and increases us; it opens forth our power and unrolls the map of our qualities to be a guidance and a knowledge to us and wakes up our strength like a sleeping lion dragged forth and roused until his might amazes and shakes us. By naught but labor can a man be this riches to himself, that he unfolds and opens and knows himself and sees the might that is in him, and has a grand and amazing view of himself, and is enraptured by what he may become—by naught but labor. The very trees will not root themselves unless they wrestle with boisterous winds and labor in tempests. Therefore, is not labor great riches? is it not itself a riches of life? What manner of man is he who calls it a vexation, an ignominy, a hateful thing, a poverty? What manner of thinker is he? what kind of worshiper? Nay, no worshiper, but a scoffer; and no thinker, but a babbler; nor hardly a man at all, but most unmanly, servile, and more like cattle who take no thought beyond what they can get for the cropping of it. Yet there lack not men, and some who vaunt their wisdom much, who call nature but a maimed kind of nature because labor is fixed to it, because work is ordained; and life, say they, is a hard and thistle-grown field, a poor fare, a starving or else sweating caravan to the grave.

O! in my soul I do rejoice against such, and pity them with a kind of wondering pity, that they make labor a poverty, which is, in truth, the most heavenly of riches. I can but sing with joy because life is a riches and not a waste. I would stand in the market-place and cry it over and over, that life is wondrous riches, that nature, with all glories of sea and land and heavens, is riches to every sense, and human fellowship a holy wealth by love, and a man great riches unto himself by labor. And if any say that labor is a task, I answer, Labor is life, and not to strive and put forth by strength were death. And if any one say that wisdom has labor annexed to it, I answer, Not so, but labor has wisdom annexed to it; and labor is the oppo-



site of drift and nothingness ; and if we rise out of naught, cometh wisdom immediately. But labor is a strain, they say, and strain is a grievance ; it is wearisome and over-weighting, and men are huddled by it into gangs of slaves, and the best is bound and pent and worn by it, and but staggers along like a beast of burden. I answer that often it is a strain, a long, hard strain ; because so needful a thing is work, and so heaven-weighty, that we must carry it, and yet have not learned to carry it. Well, up with it, then ! lift it ! by carrying learn to carry ! This is a man's part with it, if it be reasonable that it is better to be a man than a worm. This is the whole problem. Is it better to be a man than a worm ? If it be better, then all that a man does and must do and carry, is but the riches whereby he is a man and not a worm. Labor is yet a great weight, for so vast riches is not handled easily nor lifted well until men have learned much. Hard struggles, oh how hard !—rude and grinding toils, long and hope-hiding fagging, grim travail, pale drudgery—these hang on us like iron collars and clank like leg-fetters. But this is the drag and grind of the great weight of treasure, while we have not learned to pull at it all together. Sometime we shall learn ; but it shall be true then, and now is, and forever must be, that work is noble. It is the badge of the King on us. Labor itself is riches of life, being the self-unfolding of the soul to become rich and to know that it is so. Oh, whatever preaching is that which calls labor a primal curse ! What mean thinking, what slave's babble, that it is an ill now, that it is to bear burdens and “groan and sweat under a weary life ;” as if to sleep, to sport and to be at ease, were the riches of life and a man's part in creation ! No, to work is riches and noble, mighty and high. It is profusion of riches, poured all around us like rain on a full soil. It is glory and light, honesty and beauty, decoration and honor and power—a riches of joy. “The very exercise of industry immediately, in itself, is delightful,” says Barrow, in his strong way, “and hath an innate satisfaction which tempereth all annoyance and even ingratiateth the pains going with it.” But “sloth is a base quality, the argument of a mind wretchedly degenerate and mean, which is content to grovel in a despicable state, which aimeth at no worthy thing, nor pursueth anything in a laudable way, which disposeth a man to live gratis

and ingratelously on the public stock, as an insignificant cipher among men, as a burden on the earth, as a wen of any society, culling aliment from it, but yielding no benefit or ornament thereto."

Labor fills the world with a vast net-work, which is one of the most rich of all sights. Think of our banks, the carrying trade, the roads, the machinery by which transportation is effected, the vast bulk of that transportation moving all the time—a mighty wonder—the postal service, international relations, and the dependence of the ends of the earth on each other, happily increasing all the time, great riches triumphing over wants—all these fill the mighty artery of life with a torrent. No sluggard shall know the riches of life. I mean not that he shall be poor in purse, though it is often so; but if he have gold galore, still he shall have no riches of life if he lag or lounge slothful and lumpish, or if he skip and sport selfish and giddy. For how can the riches of life be shared if one take no part in what makes all the riches, the universal labor? There is a ceaseless labor in all creation; what is he who will not work but an alien, then? He hath no state in creation for all moves and labors, full of this great riches of work. "The heavens do roll about with unwearied motion, the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influences; the earth is ever laboring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap and sprouting out fruits and seeds to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing, the winds are blustering to keep the elements sweet in which we live."

Another riches that comes with work, is thought. Thought itself is labor, great labor, of all labor the very greatest, the crown of humankind; and therefore no riches of life is like to the riches which thought is, for labor is the greatest riches, and to think is the greatest labor. "Who doth not find that all the power in the world is not able to command, nor all the wealth of the Indies to purchase, one notion." Yea, this great riches of life, the wonder, glory, animation, exhilaration of thoughts echoing and coursing through us is to be had by any man who will labor with his mind, and is not to be bought for any less price than the riches of labor. What a wonder of riches, what a great and blessed fullness of life, that its greatest riches, which are

love and thoughts, may be had by any one who will come after them with heart-full and head-full work. And who can utter what a riches thought is? The virtue of thinking, the faculty of reflecting, the gift of ruminating, the strength of considering, the lustiness of reasoning, the sway of ideas—who can tell such riches! Who can count the riches that have gathered? For thought has been for ages like the ocean, burying wealth, but giving naught back, and losing naught. And all these riches washed together in thought's bed he may take of who will use the greater riches of the power of the air and the power of the water by thinking, and become a rich magician over the elements. How delicate and effluent, but mighty and unbounded, like a genie's substance, is the riches of thinking! That we can match things together, lay one by another and build of them; and compare things to see the likeness of them and the unlikeness, and conclude therefrom; and gather the things to be put together and the things to be compared, from all parts of the earth and all kinds of knowledge; that we can leap anywhither in an instant and behold anything by the mind's eye, yea, and be with it, and return, and yet in our journey of thought have kept the hands busy at their task here and the feet walking whither they were pointed; that we can fly like light from thought to thought, from truth to truth, from one to another curious thing and among discoveries like trees in a forest, yea, with swiftness to which light is naught,—what riches of “angels, principalities and powers, of height and depth,” are these faculties! That we can put two things together and conclude from them a certainty; that we can gather a host of things and conclude from them one law of them all; that we can think the eternal and necessary, seeing not merely that some things are so, but that so they must be,—this is “apprehension like a god;” this, by “deep calling unto deep,” is to look verily into the face of God, not to die, as the old chronicle threatens, but the more to live. This the psalmist has expressed: “Thou hast beset me behind and before and laid thine hand upon me! How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!” O what riches of life is this power of thinking! What a glory of exercise, till the mind's countenance, as the prophet says of the body's health-

ful visage, "is as sapphire!" What a wonder of forthgoing! What riches of excursion! What wealthy voyage as of a rich ship on the ocean under sun and star unto far rich regions to return with still more riches of lustrous stuffs and gems! By the wings of the riches of thought, flying not away like the riches of gold which take to themselves wings, but carrying us upward above constraints, and making us to go through all bars like a spirit, we are lifted into our pure selves, as if undraped of the body that has weight. For often when earnestly I have been thinking, and when with double thinking I have been setting the thoughts with words, I have been translated and lifted so out of my body's presence and senses, that I have come back to my tenement, with a shock, as if I had burst suddenly through a roof or flown in at a skylight, and with Paul I cry, "I know a man caught up even to the third heaven, whether in the body or out of the body I know not; God knoweth!"

Another riches of life by labor is health, which simply is the strength and completeness of the bodily part of this earthly life. With labor, which is exercise of ourselves, comes soundness, haleness, freshness; we bloom, we are hardy and stanch, we have a flush, a vigor, "more ruddy in body than rubies, the visage as of sapphire." With inaction, sleeping and ease, and getting somewhat for nothing, come distempers and taints, infections, plagues; we decay, we are polluted; lameness, halting, withering fall on us. No one knows what real health is, as finely has been said, unless he feel every moment like standing up and shouting with joy, to give thanks for the mere blessing of existence. And spiritual health is like unto bodily health, in rejoicing in simply being, in being here, and in knowing this great life that we have here. As to be in bodily health is to rejoice in mere existence, so to be in spiritual and mental health is to rejoice wonderfully in the riches of life, and to spread out, as it were, the members of the soul into them, to disport, to go about and delight and put forth strength in them, as the body waves its members, arms and legs, and pushes forth with ecstasy, glow and glee, in the air and water, and stamps the earth with the foot and runs for very joy and power!

Such riches of life is labor that even forced labor, hard and heavy, too heavy, yet hath its worth and power in behalf of

good for us, and is simply too heavy riches piled in one spot, too heavy for the time and too much gathered. A friend wrote me "How blessed, after all, is that business which keeps us so at work that we cannot be lonely," and another wrote me, "I have my anxiety and pain, but thanks be to God I am at work again." Therefore if labor is often heavy, remember that it is but a heavy shield, very heavy mayhap, but still a shield, and behind it we escape many hurts and pains and pangs and wants. A man laboring is like one carrying a long rope coiled round and round his neck, which he cannot unwind, which fain he would cut in half, or throw away all of it if he can not be rid of a part. But when he falls into a pit, then is the rope immediately his riches, more than all his other possessions, the means whereby he climbs out of that pit. Yea, a riches of life is labor! a riches of riches! so blessed! so beautiful! a riches like gold! so strong and fruitful a riches, like deep soils and watered valleys! Who is not decked that labors? Who that works is not made full of man-worth, and shall not lift up his head high, and walk proudly, and see the sky nod to him and the sun salute him? Of late I went up into a high building and took a look out over a great city. I noticed what never I had seen before, the steam-pipes on nearly every roof in that dense working part of the city, pouring forth their white and beautiful vapors. It seemed to me, as I stood admiring, like a gala head-gear of labor. I thought of all the industry, of the riches of the industry, that those cloudy vapors meant, those feathery ornaments. It seemed to me the city was dressed for the blithe riches of work, clad in red bonnets waving with white plumes.

Another part of the exercise of ourselves is bearing, enduring. Shall I call endurance a riches of life? Shall I say that bearing of pain and grief must be called a wealth of life? Is this a false, tricksey, sentimental gospel? Do I but play with words if I call endurance a riches? Well, why not a riches? In my soul I love chivalry in life. 'Twas a noble quality in the old knighthood, that the knight sought arduous adventures. 'Twas not to be at ease, but to be at pains, that he donned armor. The greater his toils, vigils, exposures, sufferings, the more his honor and glory and the more he drew to his soul, as a rich garment around him, the knowledge that he was indeed a knight.



This was the ideal. Why not such an ideal for life? Nay, how little and shameful, how empty of all honor seems the ideal of life about us, that it is comfort and ease, that pleasures and soft charms are its riches!—Not so, but strength and power, and to be a grand human being, to be doing and bearing because this is arduous and noble, to be exercising ourselves, to be showing our strength by straining our strength to great actions of doing or bearing or trying, this is exalted, this is the fruit of the spirit, this is the outpouring of the earth, this delivers us joys and a vast sense of life which itself is very fire and flame of joy. And therefore, with grand bearing and enduring enters great riches of life. Shall I say that to bear richly is greater and grander than to labor richly? Yea, I will say so; for to bear is a kind of labor—to wrestle, to struggle and to toil, to bear up mightily, to be hardy, strong and straining when tumbling things would beat us down. This is labor; but it is labor with advantage of good ground, for it is labor on ourselves. If labor on the earth be bright riches, what riches is labor on ourselves? To bear, therefore, to endure nobly, quietly, not courting pain but not being a runaway from it, to lift a heavy weight and strain to it, yet groaning not unto others about it, because it is a brave duty and a human part, what riches is this! what proper glory! what fitness for a man! what riches of life above all ease and fortune and pleasures! Yea, I will call sorrow a riches of life. Is not this shown by the riches of soul needful unto sacred sorrow? For the empty, vain, frivolous, tripping and light-minded, they sorrow not, nor can they until they be rich above vanity and light things. They may be peevish or vexed or troubled, and cry much with pains and losses; but vexation and troubles are menial things. Sorrow belongs to royalty of soul, and is divine. Close with it comes riches, oh, great riches, that lift life into the divine light and show it truly, that it is of God, and full of the riches of God, which shall make peace. Riches of obedience, of knowledge, of wide knowledge and far sight, of power to feel, to restrain, to rule, to be strong, to bless God, oh, let us bethink us what riches this is! What a reason for living, what a seal on life in God's image, what honor and great riches!

I have called laboring and bearing obedience. This is not to be forgotten. Obedience is the source of great riches in life;



for obedience is the following of His will who hath made all riches, and we can come at them only by Him whose they are. And all things are filled with his power and spirit, so that if we obey with love and piety, all things work together for good to us, as Paul says; that is, to give us riches of life, and show life to be a great riches. If all things obey him, and we, too, obey, we are in league with all and have all things at hand and around us, marshaled well; and they serve us, agree with us, and life is full of their riches for us. Obedience of spirit toward God is to meet what comes to us, either to do or to bear, lift it up and carry it indoors, and take it, not rejecting nor bemoaning, wailing nor muttering, nor running from it. This obedience toward God is like unto knowledge or science toward nature. An economist says: "Through virtue and labor to knowledge, through the control which knowledge may give over the forces of nature to leisure, and through leisure to welfare, not only material, but mental and spiritual, appears to be the method of evolution which the power that makes for righteousness has established as the law governing the portion of human life which is spent on this earth while man dwells in the material body." So, first by labor and discipline forced on us comes the obedient spirit, and by this spirit labor rises into riches, and discipline into a power which is beauty; and then by obedience we are led, led and shown the way, and thereupon all things help us. Then comes peace and leisure, and thereby new knowledge and life, new joy and riches and good. And so the blessedness of religion comes down on us, because we have climbed unto life's riches. Our praise and thought and victory go up to God, and when they come back from him we call them his blessings; and so they were when they rose up unto him from us; and they come back "filled with immortality." The religious feeling rises like the mist from the earth, which, says the old poet, returned again to water the ground. Think of the source of life from which we spring. We gaze, we think on all the riches of creation, from the minute life which is so wonderful and so perfect, so enriched with beauty, so agile in the water drop, to the enormous spheres and transcendent spaces of the heavens; we think of human riches, love, experience; and religion says to the lowly, to the obedient, Your interests, your needs, your longings, aspirations, labors, sorrows,

are a part of the riches of God's world. Fear not. You are not dropped from the hand that guides the stars. Strive, watch, pray, trust; you shall see the face of God.—It is delightful to notice in the Bible the constant song of joy therein, to observe how the singers and prophets and moralists therein cry aloud that we must “rejoice evermore,” because life is such riches of God. The great book is full of such sayings: “Good tidings of great joy to all people;” “Enter into our Master's joy that our joy may be full, and such as no man can take from us;” “Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;” “God's law rejoiceth the heart, and is sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb;” “In his presence is fulness of joy, yea, exceeding joy;” “Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace;” “Believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;” “In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice;” “My heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise him;” “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness;” “Rejoice in hope;” “A lively hope;” “An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled;” “They that love thy name shall be joyful in thee.”

“Is life worth living?” A wretched question. As if the blind should ask whether sight be worth having; or the deaf, Is sound worth knowing? For who would ask these things but the blind or the deaf? Tell me—Is song worth singing? Is music worth making? Is refreshment by water worth its time and cost? Yes, if there be thirst for song and music and cleanliness! And the soul thirsting for them will take song and music as they are, and love them, and bring them forth until their riches pour out like mountain waters. So, if there be a thirst for life, who that thirsts for it will ask if it be worth while to live, or whether better be a man than a worm? A thirst for life—what is it? A wish not to die? No, but a wish not to be dead. To die is like being snatched or rapt away from an orchard while my hand is on the fruit, while I am full of delight of eye in the color and shape of it, and my fingers wonder at its soft covering, and my mouth has the taste of it, and all my body is refreshed with the streams of it. But to be dead is like lying in that orchard a lump of clay, while the breezes blow, the trees murmur, the birds sing and fruits ripen, and I know them not, and

all these riches drop around me where I lie a clod—yea, and soon they cover me up and put me away that my body be not noisome to them that are athirst for life, who go thither for the riches of the fruits of it. Oh, I hope that with every day of joy we shall walk more wonder-struck, more reverent, more humble, more adoring, amid all these glorious forms of living power. Then the riches of life will make us rich, will become *our* riches; for each one has what he loves and is what he adores. Then we shall grow large in mind and heart by reason of knowing the great riches of life. We shall be able to add to our own little care or duty or labor or joy or sorrow (I say little, yea, though it be much, still I say little) the experiences and the powers of all other living creatures, and their thoughts, so that all that is in us will be made deeper, and we shall take the riches of life; and joy will become an earnest and solemn force within us.

A poet sings thus:

“To win, to find, to meet and to possess,  
Delights thee in the walk of mortal life;  
For lo! they win, they find now heavenly things:  
This one a bride! That mother there a child!  
A son, a wanderer comes back home again  
To his old father! \* \* \* \* \*  
The housewife's batch of bread has turned out well!  
The flax has prospered! The old orchard-tree  
Will bear once more whole baskets-full of fruit!  
The children are for winter warmly clad!  
The first wee tooth shines in the infant's mouth!  
Even such small joys thy heart can understand;  
And privily thou seekest some dark nook,  
And weapest a short moment, with dry eyes.  
So liv'st thou glad for men and for thyself.”

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Now I come to the practical matter, or moral question. By what means may we acquire the riches of life? How are we to enjoy these riches that are so plentiful and so glorious? I answer, Simply by observing our place and right relations toward them. And this place of ours, and these relations, are these: First, *to take* the riches. If you consider this, it is not a little thing; for it is really a great and rare wisdom to lift up and carry with us all the good things that fall at our feet as we

go. Secondly, *to hinder no other* in taking the riches; this is the law of justice. Thirdly, *to help others* to take the riches; this is the law of kindness. But the second and third, that is, the rules to hinder not others, but to help, give power for the first rule, the rule, namely, to take these riches as we meet them. Not to hinder others, and then heedfully to help others, are necessary to our own power of taking. For nothing so eats up our virtue to take the riches of life as selfishness; and it is selfish not to be just, and not to be helpful. Now this we shall see if we ask specially and carefully what selfishness is, and then how it stands related to the riches of life in the three kinds of these riches.

What then is selfishness? I answer that selfishness is not merely the seeking of things for ourselves; for we are commanded to love our neighbor *as ourselves*, which at least I interpret to mean that we may be concerned for our own interests and benefits. Besides, if we care for others, why not for ourselves too?—for each one, surely, is as considerable and important as an other one, and, therefore, a man as reasonably may care for himself as for any other person. If, moreover, we look not to our own good, how can we serve others? For if we care not for ourselves, soon we shall lose all power and substance to serve any others with. Therefore, I say, that selfishness means not, indeed, the seeking of benefits for ourselves, for this is both right and needful.

But let us look more closely. There are three factors in this question: First, each man's own self; secondly, the persons that are near, belonging to each one in his own special little realm of life; thirdly, all the world, the great family of man. Now, among these, and in devotion to each of them, there is a due balance which is order, goodness, help, happiness. Hence it follows that there may be evil devotion to others as well as to ourselves; and this evil devotion may be a bad concentration on either those dear ones close at hand and hard by us both in body and in heart, or also—and sometimes so it is—a thoughtless, unheeding and hurtful devotion to the great whole of the human family, neglecting those that are near. Selfish *action* is that kind of bad action which disturbs the due balance between oneself and those near by and the whole great world, unsettling that

balance by excess of interest for ourselves; that is to say, action for our own purpose without due regard to the good of the whole also. Selfish *thinking* is to think more toward and for ourselves than will keep the balance of our doing and our action right; and selfish *feeling* is to feel more for ourselves than will keep that due and right balance of action. Thus selfish thinking and selfish feeling are such as join not our own interests with the whole, but would follow our own without the whole, without due concern or plan for the whole.

This is all very plain. But now I remark what begins to reach toward the centre of this subject, that the danger of excess in devotion to either of these factors is different for each, and the greatest danger is that we shall be badly and harmfully, or cruelly, devoted to ourselves. The disturbance of the balance is most at hazard in that way. Which is to say, we run every day in life more risk of being devoted unduly to our own interests, than of thinking unduly of the pleasures of those near us, or of the good of all the world. This is because we have come up from a state of brute selfishness, and the conflict, the struggle, the war in such a state, still exists in us as a tendency, and even as a tradition. So that by the tendency we incline to great regard of ourselves, and by the tradition we lean to the praise of this self-love, declaring it right and wise. This bias is reinforced by the affections, because therein we tend to be selfish, not only for ourselves, but in behalf of those we love against the whole. Again it is roused and enforced by the fierce competitions of life, by the bad social order which now makes it so very hard to take care well of oneself except as one seems to be doing it in strife with others. Finally, the slow progress of mankind tends to excess of thinking of ourselves, yet this slow progress is necessary; that is, there is a need of all being good together for any one to be at his best, or even very good. Any one may act wrongly by himself easily; but one can act well, or be at his best, easily, only if all act rightly together. Hence it is that the slow progress of mankind and the continual wrongs about us make it so hard for us to free ourselves from ourselves, and climb above this danger of excess of self-interest.

But now if this be the danger, it makes a difference indeed, and is very important, what is the state and tendency of a man's



heart—the *state* and *tendency*, I say, of a man's heart, whether toward himself or toward others, that is, whether in the direction of the danger, or happily and blessedly contrary to this danger. Here we touch the subject at its depth; here we come to the practical point in these thoughts of the riches of life, that selfishness or unselfishness lies in the deep heart as a constant motive, and that selfishness, as I shall show, makes us poor amid the riches of life.

It appears, now, that it is not selfish to think of ourselves, nor to feel for ourselves; but—I pray you mark—to think of ourselves *first*, and feel for ourselves *most*. Which is to say, when occasion or choice comes to us, as daily they come in great numbers, what *first* leaps to a man's mind and heart, the thought for himself or for others? Which has the instantaneous forthcome? Then, after that, which *feels* he for *most*—himself or others? These are the test questions revealing the selfish or unselfish soul. With the brutes, from whom, so it now seems conceded and gradually more and more known, we have slowly climbed by divine upward drift, it is each one for himself. But now, if reason bring not the sense of one for others, and for all, it makes man a more dangerous animal than any other, but no nobler. As Froude has said, “Where all are selfish, the sage is no better than the fool, only rather more dangerous.” The growth must be toward balanced thought for oneself, for others, and for the whole. This balance gives shape and nobility to growing power.

Now, if I mistake not, this law or definition of selfishness, that it is thinking of oneself *first*, and then feeling for oneself *most*, throws great light on life, and shows us our true qualities. For example: It is selfish to harm any for our own pleasure, for this is to feel for ourselves *most*. It is also selfish not to try to benefit others with our own benefiting, for this is to think of ourselves not only *first*, but only. Again, if we see unfortunates, the poor, the maimed, the sick, the grieved, what shall we say instinctively? Ah, my friends, I do think this is a question reaching very deep down into one's soul—what *instinctively* shall we do? Rejoice that we are not like those unfortunates? That is selfishness—feeling for ourselves *most*. Shall we grieve that they are not so happy as we are? Will that be our *instinctive* feeling, and *first*? A searching test! That is righteous and



unselfish, for it is thinking of others, and feeling for them, *first* and *most*. This view of selfishness shows also why many persons are so very selfish in petty things, and so thoughtlessly selfish; as, for example, always taking the best of things if they be by, even the fairest looking of fruit when others are by to whom we should offer it, preferring them, and the most comfortable place while others are standing near—because such persons think of themselves *first*, and feel for themselves *most*. I will stop to make a practical application, because I like not to see a growing tendency among men, which I observe in the public vehicles constantly, not to arise and give their places to women. I have observed this curious fact, that a man who will keep his seat when a woman stands by unseated, nevertheless by no means will scramble into a seat which is made vacant, if a woman be by unseated; and yet I see not why he may not seize at once what he may keep afterwards. Now, if, with that gentle deference which ought to be in every man's soul for a woman, he thinks of her *first*, and feels for her *most*, he will be as uncomfortable in retaining his seat, as he would think himself a boor if he scrambled for it. This will help us see how actions shall be judged, whether they be selfish or not. I propose to you this simple test of *time* as to thought, and then of *amount* as to feeling. Which *first* leaps to your mind? Yourself or your neighbor and friend, and the whole? And when you have had the thought, which then do you feel for *most*?

But now you may say, How shall we meet the practical difficulty of judging? The conditions are very complex. How shall we judge always what acts are those that keep the right balance of these three factors, ourselves, our near ones, and the great world? Ah, but this very definition and test of selfishness helps us to answer, for we have seen that selfishness is a matter of impulse and feeling, impulse to think of ourselves first, and to feel for ourselves most. Now if a man have strong sense, good mind, clear thinking, and he be unselfish, the impulse will leap in his heart to think of others first, and then his strong sense easily will find the right measure of care and pains for himself. He will run little risk of deciding ill, because his impulse will be against the chief danger, and his sound sense rule his impulse. But if his heart leap for himself, in the line of the danger,

then his sense will be given to finding great, ample and lucrative ways to feed his own wishes; and as his heart leaps so will he follow, and be clean gone over into the peril, and see naught clearly but his own selfish wishes.

With this clear view, now, of selfishness, that it lies in the *first* thought being for ourselves, and the *most* feeling for ourselves, apply it to the riches of life, and it will appear, if I mistake not, that the selfish soul can take little of these riches. As the riches of life which nature is, comes unto us, the glories and lights and joys of creation, how can selfishness see and know these friends of the soul? Its eye is turned inward to look at its own greeds or profits, for its own grabbings, not outward turned, to see what matter will fill the eye with light and beauty. Again, selfishness never will seek knowledge and beauty for their own high sakes and purely, being occupied all with its own self, and its own advantages to be obtained; and when knowledge and beauty are not sought for their own pure sakes, we fall very far short of the riches of them. Again, there will not be humility enough in the selfish to take the riches of nature and knowledge. For of all vanity what greater than to deem oneself worthy to be one's own complete and perfect pursuit and care? "What," says Joubert, "possibly can one introduce into a mind already full, and full of self?" I know it is said often that a moral and lofty tone of mind is not needful to the highest and most quickened enjoyment of nature. We are told that if one be endowed with sense of harmony in colors and sounds, the perception of shapes and lines, the symmetry and beauty of curves, then he will see the charms of nature and rejoice in them, and have them all turn their riches into him, even though he be a treacherous and selfish soul. No, it is not so. Selfishness never can go beneath the surface of shape and color, nor know the beauty which is soul and meaning, nor see the divinity in nature, being contrary to it.

The next riches of life, I said, was human love. Selfishness has not this riches, nor can have, nor be aught but against the very nature of this riches. For selfishness is the thinking of oneself first, and feeling for oneself most. But if love mean anything under heaven, it means to think of another first, and feel for that other most. Selfishness, therefore, never attains the

eminence of the bliss of love, nor knows indeed anything but the shell and outward show of it. "The selfish affect no man otherwise than he seemeth able to serve their turn. All their shows of friendship and respect are mercenary and mere trade." Besides, selfishness eats away gratefulness. This follows of necessity on the pride and conceit of selfish men, because, not being humble-minded, and being so eager to get things, they take everything as due to them; and how can one be grateful for his own? And yet gratefulness, the dear delicious sense of obligation, leaning on, resting on, owing to, some one we love, is one of the most fair traits, the most blissful necessities, the sweetest rewards, of the affections. I know that some speak of love as being possibly selfish. They combine the two words together. They say there is a love which is real and must be called love, but is in truth a fierce "passion for possession." Away! I will refuse to name love a "passion for possession." Whether the English language need another word for whatever feeling that may be which is phrased as a "passion for possession," I say not, though often I have wished for such a word. But, however, I will not use for it that title of LOVE which means elements as pure and simple and as forth-putting into another's life, as the creativeness of God. Fichte says, "The enjoyment of a single hour passed happily in the pursuit of art or science far outweighs a whole lifetime of sensual enjoyment, and before this picture of blessedness the mere sensual man, could it be brought home to him, would sink in envy and dismay." And, in like manner, say I that one hour, or one fleeting moment, of the purity of love outweighs a lifetime or universe of "passion for possession," ay, and is a purity and heavenliness of joy before which the passionate man, could it be brought home to him, would sink in envy and dismay. When sometimes I have dwelt on this topic in my lone thinking on the sights of the world, and in my weighing of friendships—for who must not do this, sad though it be?—I have seen that there are two modes of loving, the passionate and the tender, and that the passionate is really but a selfish thirst for having, and the tender, a divine thinking of another first, and feeling for that other most. Of the joys of this love which makes the supreme riches of life, the selfish never can dream.

Here enters what I said of this second domain of riches, that it is a delight of love *and liberty*. You will remember that I promised to tell you why specially I added *liberty*. 'Tis because there is no true love without reverence for freedom; and this "passion for possession," the bastard that artfully puts on the robe and purple of the pure stock of love, always will show its base, fierce falseness by invading liberty. True love leaves the one free who is beloved, treads very gently and softly on the threshold of his mind, his will, his nature; will not encroach, will not oppress, nor overpower. But selfishness oppresses, desiring only to own, to have, to bind to itself. Oh, the misery, the death, that follow this trampling on personal dignity in love, on the liberty of the mind and the will! The torment and shame of it, the wretched fate of being so degraded, subject to another, under him and pressed to death, the will all destroyed and lifeless, individual features suppressed, crushed out of all shape, the desires and good pleasure and purpose and self-direction of the mind bruised to an aching livid flesh, not daring to decide aught, but always waiting for leave, always begging grace or allowance, or hinting a wish fearfully, such abjectness, such slavery—who can bear it? Who can inflict it but the most cruel or the most unthinking? When 'tis done, when 'tis wreaked and brooked, love flies away doubly; for neither can the one who is trampled love very dearly the heart that grinds down the foot, nor can he, the trampler, love well the thing lying meanly under his heel. "There is no friendship without equality;" no, nor love of lovers either, whether besought or wedded, however some prate loosely or vilely of this great human joy in equal state. There may be indeed a "passion of possession" without equality; yea, I think that that hatefulness seeks the pliant and weak who may be bended and looped into any shape and tied up in any manner. But there is no love without equality of spirit standing at one level of dignity and looking face into face and eye into eye at one height of mutual respect and observance. 'Tis not needful that the two shall have like riches or position or genius or knowledge, if they have the like holy grace of revering another's will, freedom and personal being, not to tread on it or assault it or touch it rudely. Without this mutual and reverent liberty, I say again there is no love;

and I would I could cry it like a trumpet till every household rang with it—no love, naught worth that heaven-name, naught living, as love lives, but a mere vogue, a show, a simulation, a mask painted on a dead face. For love is so mighty an exercise of the spirit and so stretches all the powers of the soul, needing the greatest nobility to do it well, that no art, no conquest nor prowess is to be likened to it—above any poetry and music, a greater feat of soul than any eloquence, more to be admired than reasoning, than the making of science or the collecting of history or any human glory. How then can loving be done well by the broken in spirit, bowed down, set at the beck of another, waiting a master's nod, a slave, a helot, an understrapper,—how can such a bound, badged, abased vassal, a cowed creature, a groaning spirit, despising its portion, come to the whole great estate of love? 'Tis not possible; yet more possible than that the enslaver, who has made a fellow-being an underling, over-ridden a tender brow and trampled down a will, can come to nobleness of love or be seized of the wide freehold of it. Love in tyranny is but half itself, either in delight or in power, and no more can fly the heavens than a bird with one wing severed. And what human power indeed is itself, or whole, if unfreed? or what can stretch a wing above the earth if the other wing, freedom, be gone? As Cato said he would fight, not to be free himself, but to live in a country of freemen, so must the twain wedded into one draw the sword of the spirit, not each for his own good pleasure, but to live together in a two-peopled world of the free! Then come light and joy, tenderness, courage, brightness, wit, beauty, health and strength, nimbleness, undertakings, deeds. Naught can measure the force and bliss of the heart in love where the will of each is left free, personal, individual, unhurt, revered,—self-respect and dignity builded on love and reverence, like a fair city on a two-peaked hill. This is a vast double riches of life, the joy and riches of love and liberty, as I have said; but these riches are not for the selfish man. He can get but part of the double wealth, and that but a groveling portion, lacking the other wing wherewith to soar. For selfishness can leave nothing free which can be gotten, clutched, put to its own use and purpose, made over into its own pattern, and wholly pounced on, usurped, appropriated. I say the



selfish man is estopped of love. Let it be cried aloud over and over that selfishness can not love. For it, this pure riches of life exists not; and how better, or more like love, is a "passion to possess" a person than a greed for owning things?

But if this now be the case with the nearest, that there is no joy of love, and no knowledge of the riches of life for the selfish, how much more is this so toward the more distant! The selfish man will be displeased with the excellence and good things of others, because they are not his. Hence, others' riches are his poverty. What a poverty that is! And if we take the widest scope, the relation of the mind, heart and soul to mankind, the power to find the riches of life in this wide view—the truth is the same, that these riches belong only to the unselfish. For the unselfish man who thinks of another first, and of the whole first, beholds the quality of mankind unrolled like a fair map of a fair realm. Ah! friends, we gain great power to see the truth when the truth is all we wish to see. Unselfishness is divining. Easily it sees the balance of right action, as I have said. We shall not be long deciding, nor go far astray, if our impulse be contrary to the danger, and we wish before all to see what is due and truthful and right. But what is this? To see what is true, to make right decisions, to know the balance, is naught but the same as to spread society fair and beautiful before us, as it is in nature and destiny—a transporting sight, a glorious riches and great wealth; but never for the selfish, who, deciding not rightly in this delicate balance, see society all awry, one estranged from another, and all in disorder and jangle, like bells out of tune, though hung for sweet concords.

Finally, come we to the third realm of the riches of life, namely, labor and obedience. Again I say, selfishness cannot take these riches. Selfishness loves ease, complaining of labor. Also what sense has it of that implication of one with another which is the human family, in which also lies the urgency of labor, that all must work together fairly, since no man can live or stand by himself? For selfishness thinks of itself first, and as first, and feels for itself most; whereas all are of equal import. "In reason," says Barrow, "is it not very absurd that any man should look on himself as more than a single person?"



\* \* \* May not any man reasonably have the same apprehensions and inclinations as we may have? May not any man justly proceed in the same manner as we may do? Will they not, seeing us mainly affect our private interests, be induced, and in a manner forced, to do the like. Then what need can there be for propping and scrambling for things, and in the confusion thence arising, what quiet, what content, can we enjoy?

\* \* \* As we are all born members of the world, as we are compacted into the commonwealth, as we are incorporated into any society, as we partake in any conversation or company, so by mutual support, aid, defence, comfort, not only the common welfare first, but our own particular benefit consequently, doth subsist. By hindering or prejudicing them, the public first, in consequence our particular, doth suffer. Our thriving by the common prejudice will in the end turn to our own loss. As if one member sucketh too much nourishment to itself and then swelleth into an exorbitant bulk, the whole thence incurreth disease, so coming to perish or languish, whence consequently that irregular member will fall into a participation of ruin or decay, so it is in the state of human corporations. He that in way unnatural or unjust—for justice is that in human societies which nature is in the rest of things—draweth unto himself the juice of profit or pleasure, so as thence to grow beyond his due size, doth thereby not only create distempers in the public body, but worketh mischief and pain to himself.” Wherefore, I say, that the dignity, the grace, the riches of labor is not for selfishness, that delves thus but to make all a disease, an infamy, and counts work but a pain if it cannot have therewith, too, as much gain as can be heaped up from others despoiled of it.

Selfishness, again, hates obedience. For the selfish man thinks of himself first, that is, as best. Therefore, he would command or lead always, never follow, nor obey, nor be second. Also he feels for himself most. Therefore, he would have his own will, and never suffer aught even that another may not suffer. Moreover, selfishness has no humility, as before I have said, for the man who thinks of himself always first and feels for himself most, must do so surely because he thinks he deserves such a first place, and he must think he ought to have it in others’ thoughts as well as his own. Hence he will know naught

of the blessed humility with riches which obedience is.

Here must I not omit one of the great riches of life of which I have said naught, the rich stores of labor and obedience in the memory when old age draws on. "It is to live twice, when we can enjoy the recollections of our former life." But what recollections can we enjoy? Only those against which selfishness is set and will have naught to do with them, and cannot have to do with them—the glories of nature and of man, the blessed riches of beauty, not open to the selfish soul, as I have said. But glowing memories, if gathered by the eye of love and humble observation, do inhabit the soul to store it like a great warehouse with riches. A beautiful example I have met in the life of Niebuhr, the celebrated Danish traveler. "When old, blind, and so infirm that he was able only to be carried from his bed to his chair, he used to describe to his friends the scenes which he had visited in his early days with wonderful minuteness and vivacity. When they expressed their astonishment, he told them that as he lay in bed, all visible objects shut out, the pictures of what he had seen in the East continually floated before his mind's eye, so that it was no wonder he could speak of them as if he had seen them yesterday. With like vividness the deep intense sky of Asia, with its brilliant and twinkling host of stars, which he had so often gazed at by night, or its lofty vault of blue by day, was reflected, in the hours of stillness and darkness, on his inmost soul." Of this traveler it has been remarked that in his many journeyings, and rich accounts thereof, he leaves himself strangely out of view; by which it was that he piled up such riches within himself. The life of the heart's blissful recollections and scenes of undying beauty, these are not for the selfish, nor the fruits of labor and obedience in the spirit of law and duty and service; not for the selfish, but for those who by love, labor and humility become like these virtues. Unto them, the riches of life become in the soul beautiful pictures, and truly labor-stores and obedience-peace; and they pour their riches into the memory of old age. Whence, perhaps, it is one of those wondrous marvels of our constitution whereon we must look with devout eyes, that age delights to look backward; for this is but to view the great riches of life, which wait on him who has loved them, single-minded, but wished not to get them apart for himself. The law is clear,

wonderful and noble, that "virtue indeed will give us power and place in the world; but if we seek the power, we have not the virtue." So the riches of life, beauty, grandeur, feeling, mighty riches of joy and understanding, will come to the soul of humble knowledge-seeking, of steady labor, of faithful obedience; but if one seek the riches, he has not such a soul; nay, but is one who of himself thinks first, and for himself feels most. The riches of life would be far greater in their joyful forms than they are, if all men were generous and loving; which shows what a solemn responsibility and weight of the Father's ordaining is laid on us here. For then the riches would be increased by ourselves, whose powers of heart and soul are the greatest riches of all earth's riches. But as it is, the riches of these so beautiful forms have to be replaced in great, and very weary, part, by the riches of sorrow and of too hard laboring.

Finally, how can the selfish man love God, the riches of the riches "The Eternal is in man and surrounds him at all times," says Fichte; "man has but to forsake the transitory and perishable [which is to say, the use of nature and men for his own glory, power and pleasure] with which the true life never can associate, and thereupon the Eternal, with all its blessedness, forthwith will come and dwell with him. We cannot win blessedness, but we may cast away our wretchedness [which is simply to seek no more our own glory, power and pleasure,] and thereupon blessedness forthwith of itself will supply the empty place. Blessedness is repose in the One and Eternal, wretchedness is vagrancy amid the manifold and transitory [which is struggles and thoughts to use nature and men for our own glory, power or pleasure]: and, therefore, the condition of our becoming blessed is the return of our love from the many to the One;" or to love the One in the many; as Augustine hath it, "To love God, and our friend in God, and our enemy for God." But how can the selfish man return, or how have this love to the One? How love the One in the beauties and glories of creation, since he thinks not of him first, but of himself first, to get power and pleasure from the holy glories of creation? How love the One in whom the many human beings are, since he thinks not first of the many who are in the One, but of himself first? How love the One whose hand and law give labors, yea, and sorrows, since the selfish man thinks not first of the One whose

commandments the labors are, but of himself first, how he may get ease, how he may turn the work all to his own power or pleasure. How can the selfish man love the One, the God and Father? of whom says Seneca, "All his power is to do good," and "He is neither willing nor able to harm us," and "No sane man fears him," so all-loving and all-good is he unto all. But let us cast out this wretchedness, this poverty, that we may become rich with the riches of life!

Here ends this long sermon in three parts. I have striven to set before you the vast and glorious riches of life—according to the psalmist's verse, "The earth is full of thy riches." I have tried to set forth—

The riches of life in Creation—the joys of the senses and of knowledge:

The riches of life in Mankind—the joy of love and liberty:

The riches of life in Experience of Ourselves—the joy of labor and obedience.

Truly, are not these great riches? Is not life very rich? We have but to take it, and we are like kings with full treasuries.

O! let us look about us, on earth and sky, to be full of joy in these splendors all about us and over us! "These are but the varied God," "the rolling year is full of him," "the field's wide flush, the softening air, the mountains echoing round, the smiling forests," the chanting waters! Let me not be self-hooded, blind amid these. And let me labor, which is honor and glory and peace, taking the riches of life freely. And let me have that love which makes all things riches—

"O let me not walk in his splendors,  
Splendors of innocence in babes,  
Of joy, woe, pathos, in mid-life,  
And of the majesty of age—  
Blind, senseless, like a clod or stone,  
Or with my eyes prone earthward, brute-like,  
Peering for prey to feed ambition.  
But let me know the things God makes,  
And worship what he sets on high.  
O let me feel the pang, the woe,  
The shame, that any other knows,  
And know the praise, the honor, glory,  
Of lowly hearts living beside me."

These are riches of life; deeper than hell, for these riches have choked up hell and filled the pit thereof and covered the mouth and smoothed it with green turf; as deep as heaven, for 'tis heaven they are.

## “TAKE MY YOKE.”

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“Take my yoke upon you.”—MATT. XI. 29.

The beautiful passage in which these words occur is peculiar to the First Gospel. Scattered through the first three gospels are many passages which would have been lost but for their rescue from the stream of tradition by some one of these three evangelists. In many passages they all give an account of the same circumstances, or rehearse the same scenes, sometimes with many variations that we cannot make agree, sometimes with differences hard to explain. But they make up for these hard places, as I have said, by recording, ever and anon, each one of them, something which neither of the others offers us, yet bearing within itself, in its own nature, enough warrant that it is a true scrap of tradition from the Master.

Such is the passage, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” This carries within its own complexion and nature internal witness, I think, that it was spoken by Jesus himself; and happy are we to have these gracious, moving and beautiful words preserved for us by this one evangelist.

What is the yoke of Jesus of which he speaks, and the meaning of this whole passage? You know that in explaining the New Testament I have no other way than to strive to learn what the words would mean to a contemporary of the Master listening to him. It is very poor interpretation, false criticism, ill thinking, to put on the words of Jesus, or of any other Master or any Scripture, thoughts now current or now dear to us, simply because the language can be made to bear them. The only true, ingenuous, simple and clear-minded interpretation is gotten



by comparing the words with the historical facts of that day, that thus we may take them, so much as we can, as they were understood by those who heard them. Now in the days of Jesus, religion had become external. No more, or little, in the Jewish system, was religion a feeling of the heart, an aspiration of the soul, but a submission of the will and of the hand. He was a good Jew, and performed all his religious duties, who gave himself day by day to the requirements of the Jewish Law; and in the days of the Master those requirements had become so multiplied by the traditions of the elders, the scribes, the teachers and expounders of the old Law and Prophets, that hardly was there any hour of the day, any moment of life, which was not filled with the exactions of the Jewish Law on the good Jewish believer, so that continually he was hedged about by ceremonies which he must observe, things that must be done at certain times and carefully refrained from at other times, washings, sacrifices, prayers, ceremonies of many kinds, in obedience to which and reverence of which lay the religion of the day. This had become a sad and dry burden to spiritual-minded persons, and Jesus plainly calls it so. He says, in the passage from which the text is taken, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden under the exactions of this day, ye who stagger and hardly know how to walk upright or to bear yourselves from hour to hour with the burden of these ceremonies pressing on you, laid on you as weighty matters of conscience, so that you fear to turn from them, lest you break the very ordinance of God,—from all this come to me, and I will give you rest. In place of these things take *my* yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is a spiritual and inward righteousness." You are used—we may imagine Jesus saying—you are used, you good Jews, to call the Law a Yoke, in explanation or expression of your obedience and submission to it; and indeed you have made it a yoke, heavily pressing on your necks, and bowing your heads to the ground. But *my* yoke is light, for it is not the bondage of outward exactions, but the freedom of inward life,—religion, joy, comfort, faith, not in observing outward rites, but in lifting the soul on high. I am meek and lowly, not in that I am slavish to the commands of the Law, but in heart, where meekness and lowliness truly dwell. This is a

light yoke, a kind and gentle burden. Take it. Ye shall find rest to your souls. My yoke is easy, my burden light, because they are not outward and made by laws or rules, but inward and belonging to us by nature; and what that by nature belongs to us can be heavy? Augustine compared this yoke of Jesus, this inward spiritual bond, to the plumage of the bird, which, he said, weighed but lightly, and yet was his means of soaring to the skies. Here we have, placed in vivid contrast, the difference between internal and external religion, between the yoke of the Law and the liberty of the spirit wherewith, said Paul, Christ has made us free.

But now from this thought of Jesus I turn to another which these tender and gentle words suggest. The emphasis in this sermon shall be, "*Take my yoke*;" which is the same as saying, each one for himself, *Take the yoke*, your yoke, my yoke, each one's yoke; that is, be willing and quick to take up our own inward answerableness to ourselves, to each other, and to God.

The recognizing and assuming of our responsibilities is a large subject, so that I must limit it in this sermon very strictly. I shall speak of the importance of seeing and taking just one great particular responsibility; for I am very sure that if only we would feel deeply and live by the simple truth I wish to set forth now, the gain in human happiness and peace would be very great. I shall hold what I have to say strictly to our near relations with each other; for herein all our most dear happiness or most sad unhappiness doth lie. Either what grief or what great joy can outward things give us? But how great our power one over another to confer a joy that is heavenly, or a pain that seems to tear the heart out. So that I shall speak of one's taking his proper yoke on him in those cases where we meet difficulties together, I mean cases of disagreements, estrangements, ill-treatment one of another, misunderstandings, unkindnesses. These rear themselves very much in human life. We have not learned to bear with each other so that the bearing well is the most noticeable thing. That which first comes to light, I fear, is the need of the bearing rather than the success of it.

Now I shall try to lay down a special responsibility be-

longing to such unhappy matters, by which they may be turned to joys, blessings, and peacemakings. The principle is this: *He that hath the strongest and broadest neck* should take the yoke on him. The one that knows the most, speaking without figure, is answerable for doing the best thing, undertaking the best deed, saying the best word. You can see how far away this principle is from that which rules in the common manner of disagreement. This common way is to return for an injury an equal injury. Blow for blow, eye for eye, tooth for tooth,—this is called manly, strong, brave; yea, even some women call it womanly, though whether any will call it "*das ewige weibliche*," the eternal womanly, I know not. We say, That person slighted me to-day; I will watch my chance, I will set him at naught. That other one has neglected a good office I did him; well, it will be long before I will do him another. That man spake an ill word of me, which somebody,—doing a worse thing still,—told me of; I will pay him off, I will cast a slur on him. That woman,—I take an actual case,—kept close to me of purpose all the evening, though she knew well that the color of her dress made my complexion and apparel ugly; I will get even with her. And so on through the long catalogue of human situations and trials. Now, it is a curious thing that the persons whom we revere the most are those who have put this conduct to shame; and while we carry on the conduct, we revere those persons for censuring it. This very church was builded for a two-fold purpose, yes, for a manifold purpose, as full, as wide as the needs of human nature, as deep as the worship of God. But one part of its purpose was to enshrine and study the life of a man who said that repaying bad with bad was barbarism. His name was Jesus. He said that we should return good things for bad, and he called on the people to observe that God does so, because he has no power but to do good, as his nature is, and he sends rain on the good and the bad alike, and causes the glory of the morning wakening to shine on the eyes of the just and the unjust too.

Now the principle I wish to set forth is this, that in these cases of estrangement, misunderstanding, unkind or cruel acts (Ah, how cruel our acts to each other may be! how they do cut and tear! and what blows words are!), although it is the duty of both the persons to make peace and return good things for

bad, yet this nearly always is more the duty of one than of the other. What, then, is the test for deciding on which one that duty lies? You will tell me, perhaps, the duty rests on the one most to blame. A poor principle! A sorry warrant! How much safety does it confer? How much help, potency, knowledge, sight is in it? How always can you decide which one is the more to blame? Each one of them, when you try to make that discovery, will insist that he is the wronged one. The blame, too, may belong equally, or almost equally, to both. And, finally, if one be much more in the wrong than the other, it is like to be that very one who will refuse peacemaking, because that is his very nature, which made him most in the wrong. How, then, will you deal with him?

Now the principle that I set forth is this, as I have said, that the inward answerableness, the duty, the yoke of Jesus, rests on the one who, by nature, or by a happy education, or by whatever blessedness, has become the most reasonable, humane, and well-made person; and the strife ought to be, yea, and would be if we had a right self-respect and pride, which one most quickly should show himself to be that well-made one. I heard the question asked, When two persons meet on a narrow path, which should turn out for the other? What should we answer? The elder? Or the younger? The learned? Or the more ignorant? The richer? The poorer? No; the answer was better than these—*The polite one!*

That we may know how to fix this answerableness on ourselves, I will give you some rules. If quarrel, painfulness, disagreement, misunderstanding arise, first examine yourself thus: Here I am, entangled in an enmity. It is a base situation. It is unworthy of me—unworthy of the two of us. Now, what ought I to do? and then, what *can* I do? This depends on my conditions compared with my enemy. Let me then compare us together fairly, justly, bit by bit, advantage with advantage. It is plain that if I have any advantage, I ought to act with advantage; if I be blessed with any sort of superiority, this ought to be shown by my acting in a better way in so far as I am superior. Well, am I older? Have I a better position, more friends, more consideration, more influence? Am I better educated? Have I had the heaven-given opportunity to grow

by contact with books and with the wise? Has experience enlarged more my mind, while I have been led by the kind hand of God in ample ways, and my enemy has lived, mayhap, in some narrow corner of duties, cramped therein? Am I gifted by nature with a calmer spirit, that I may feel the great answerableness which therein lies? Is my lot more fortunate, easy, happy than his? Now if one will put such questions and make examination of himself, a little effort will do it fairly; for a man is able to see well what he sets forth to see honestly. And if by this I conclude that I have in aught the advantage of my enemy, then the weight of the responsibility to make peace and return the good for the evil presses on me more than on him, in exact proportion to the kind and amount of that advantage. Sometimes this is felt, and the fruits of it are very fair. I knew a young man who had received some hard injuries. I knew them to be hard. I had seen and noted them. I said to him, You will return such treatment as that by something equally severe? But he answered me slowly (I shall never forget it),—"No, I have been reflecting on the difference in our conditions. I am older than my enemy. I am better educated. I am more experienced. I have read more, thought more, traveled much more, and seen more of life. What are these advantages if they lay not special duty on me corresponding to them? No, I shall return no bad treatment; and if I can bring about a peace by kindness and forbearance, these advantages, that God gave me, not that I made, carry with them his command to be first in it."

That is the primary rule. The second rule I would lay down for determining our answerableness, is to reason thus: The person who has injured me has done it perhaps because he knows no better. Well, if I feel intensely the injury, that ought to mean that I do know better, which lays on me the answerableness to do the better by as much as I know the better, and not to copy him in the ill deed. Or he may have injured me, because, knowing better, he is too passionate and too feeble of will to rule his acts by his knowledge. Well, then he is to be pitied and helped, not hurt; for it is as base to strike a weak soul as to bully a weak body. If I do know better, then I am under bonds to act by that knowledge, and if, knowing better, I



be equally weak and passionate, it is but a shame to me greater than to him; and by this knowledge I am laid under special answerableness to act in accordance with it, and to be careful not to return my enemy's unkindness by a like deed, which I know to be a bad one.

In Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," the chained giant utters a most noble answer to the furies, which is like the principle I now advise. Jove has sent a horde of furies to torture Prometheus fettered on the rock, and they are hovering over and hard by the sufferer, threatening him and gloating over the miseries which they shall inflict. They cry:

"The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,  
Gazing on one another; so are we.

\*       \*       \*

So from our victim's destined agony  
The shade which is our form invests us round,—  
Else we were shapeless as our Mother Night."

A fearful gleam of Shelley's almost awful imagination,—furies whose whole shape, else shapeless, was derived from their victim's anguish, shadowing them round by forecast! When Prometheus bids them do their worst, he will not yield, they exclaim, jeering him, that he knows not the extent of the anguish they can inflict and mean to work on him. "Dost imagine," they cry,—“Dost imagine we will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?” Then follows that grand answer, worthy of an archangel,—“I weigh not what ye do, not what ye *do*, but what ye *suffer*, being evil.” Ought not we thus to think of our enemy's act,—not what he does, but what he suffers in that evil deed? Is not that right, grand, divine? For if our enemy do his deed, being ignorant, and knowing no better than to do evil to us, oh how pitiful that ignorance! the poverty of it! the wretchedness of it! the pain of it sometimes! And if he be malicious, then more wretched! Therefore either way we should weigh not what he does, but what he suffers, being evil. So did the gentle Greek, when he stood before his accusers and judges. Socrates said to the court, “It may be indeed that you will kill me now, and perhaps, as a just man always may receive that kind of hurt from an unjust man, to be put to death or exiled or deprived of his several rights, the unjust man may imagine that he inflicts a great evil on the just man. I agree not with him. For

these are but little things. But it is the unjust man who suffers the evil, which is his injustice." Friends, if only one of the persons in estrangement in most cases, would reason in this manner, peace would come down like rain on the mown field; and if all would reason so, iniquity and war would flee this lovely earth. Jesus says that by his yoke we shall find rest unto our souls. Very precisely spoken; not to our hands, for there is much to do in the world, and the very taking of this answerableness very likely will set us tasks, hard tasks, long tasks mayhap too,—the neck that takes the yoke must draw; but our soul's rest, a great quiet, peace, calm, making us know

"amid the city's jar  
That there abides a peace divine  
Man did not make and cannot mar."

But perhaps you will say to me, This advice is altogether too ideal to be of any use in the world, too far above human possibilities. But I answer you, Humanity *has* climbed to it, and it is the first duty of a man to believe he can do what has been done. Jesus climbed to it. Going to the cross, he looked on the people, some of them in tears, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me." Like the tranquil Socrates, he was far beyond their pity; like the Titan on the rock, he needed not the very pity of Jove. "Weep not for me," saith he, "weep for yourselves and for your children;" and afterwards, looking down on that raving and reviling mob, he said, "Father, forgive them, because they know not what they do;" but *I* know, would he say,—therefore the yoke is on me to bear with them, with prayer. So did the meek Huss, at Constance, when he bore all that was put on him, and answered only that he had no other arms than his endurance, "for," said he, "this alone is the priest's weapons." But in that sense we all are ordained priests of the Almighty.

Again I answer, if you tell me that all this is too high—I answer that we are able to make a kind of moral ancestry or lineage for our own souls, to which the more we be true the more can we be true, as it grows older and nobler. It is one of the great virtues of having done something noble, some grand deed, or so having forgotten ourselves that, as always we can when we forget ourselves, we have taken a flight which we

thought past all our flying, to some height of doing or feeling,—it is one of the uses of such a deed that afterwards we have a banner or scutcheon; and great shame it is if we blot the azure by falling or failing. A noble behaviour becomes like illustrious forefathers. We must be worthy of our ancestry, or, as it were, of that forefather deed of ours, which sets us the pattern of life. Thus comes the power of noble traditions in a family or a country, since to have been noble is a firm ground always, and a great source of strength, for continuing to be noble—a banner of lineage or tradition set aloft for us forever, under which we can do mightier battle. Hence 'tis not impossible, idle nor vain to lay on us this high rule of life which I have given, this heavenly yoke; for every lofty bearing of it becomes motive for the next one,—yea, as if into our good deeds the breath of life were breathed and they took shape as angels who stretch hands to us, helping by their invitation. George Elliot says the like: "Our lives make a moral tradition for our individual selves, as the life of mankind at large makes a moral tradition for the race, and to have once acted greatly seems to be a reason why we should always be noble."

But once more I answer, We *must* set up the ideal before us. Do you say I have been laying down a law *to* ideal? I answer, What will you lift before you *but* the ideal? Will you set aught before your eyes which you know not to be ideal? How does the painter draw, design and execute? To arrive at the exact level of what he beholds before him,—the assemblage of colors just as they are, and all shapes intermingled? No, but to draw forth from them the ideal, so that its effect on the beholder may be as it were to wake a dream of God. So let us aim at divine beauty in life, and set naught lower before us, and know it is divine, and for that very reason believe we are made for it; and then strive, and do the best we can, and strive again. And God help us all!



## PAUL'S THREE POINTS.

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I am to speak of Paul's three great points of belief and trust. Whenever any man accomplishes such a great work as Paul did, with such devotion, endurance, suffering, steadfastness, we may be sure he is under the power of some grand ruling ideas. For such things come not merely of an emotion; the waters are stirred by the angel of a thought. Paul lived daily with three dominant faiths filling his mind, which ruled him, inspired him, gave him force and devotion, and strengthened him to bear all his labors and sufferings by sea and land. These three beliefs were, first, that Christ was the Messiah, and was described and set forth in the Old Testament as the expected one of the Jews,—I mean that Jesus of Nazareth was the predicted King of Israel. This was one of the ruling and inspiring faiths of the great Paul. The second was that Christ would return to the earth soon, in a second coming or advent, to enter on his kingdom, since he had not taken it during his earthly appearance. Paul's third great belief was that Christianity,—which in Paul's mind was the acceptance of Christ as the Messiah, with all its consequences,—was not for the Jews only, but for mankind. These were Paul's three great points, which were to him the animating powers of all his enterprises, his prayers and his hopes.

Now these three thoughts of Paul contain two errors and one truth. These I will try to explain in the order of the points.

The first point, as I have said, was that Jesus was the Messiah, and was described in the Scriptures. The Scriptures herein, of course, mean the Old Testament Scriptures, for the



New Testament was not in existence. Paul constantly was enforcing this view, this animating faith of his. It appears continually in his writings. It looks forth, never ceasing, from the narratives of the Book of Acts; as, in the thirteenth chapter it is narrated that Paul at Antioch went into the synagogue, and when the readings were ended, the master of the synagogue said to him: "If thou hast anything to speak to the people, say on," and Paul, then rising, preached Jesus to them as the Messiah, and expounded from Moses and the Prophets that Jesus was the Messiah predicted in the Scriptures. This made a great stir in the town; but the next Sabbath day he did the same thing; whereupon many of the Jews banded together and complained of him, and drove him away from the city. Likewise at Thessalonica, as we read in the seventeenth chapter, he preached in the synagogue for three weeks; but at the end of this time the chief Jews would bear it no more, but made great uproar around the house of Jason; and Paul having escaped, they seized Jason himself and carried him before the Roman governor of the city, charging him with having harbored seditious men who preached rebellion against Cæsar. We read in the twenty-eighth chapter of Acts that, having come in person to Rome, Paul appointed a day when all the Jews of the city should gather in his house, or at least the chief rabbins and teachers among them; and they came, and Paul sat all day long, according to the story, expounding to them from Moses and the Prophets that Jesus surely was the one predicted, the Messiah who was to be received.

Now Paul was in error in this first point; and his error was twofold. First, Jesus did not conform to the Jewish expectation and dream of a Messiah. He was lowly, humble in his extraction, from a despised little town of a despised province, with no name, no ancestry, no magnificence. But the great Jewish king was to come with pomp and glory, to be of the lineage of David, and sit on a throne, retrieving the ancient magnificence of the Hebrews. Jesus came poor, without resources, having not where to lay his head, a wanderer on the earth, often driven about by furious crowds, his poor disciples helping as well as they could to minister to his needs. But the great prince who was to come was to be rich and powerful, full

of royal magnificence, of great wealth and resources, and go out to war against the Romans. Jesus also never showed any very national or clannish spirit. He loved the Samaritans as well as the Jews. He told his countrymen that to enter into the kingdom turned not on being of Jewish blood, but on living in a manner worthy of the kingdom; and that if so they did not, then they would be shut out, and many would come from the east and the west, the north and south, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the places left vacant by the unworthy children of the covenant. The truth is that the old Scriptures give no predictions of Jesus. They describe him nowhere. It was a false method of interpretation that enabled Paul to find any prediction of Jesus in these old sacred writings. This method of interpretation still survives. It is easy for anyone to find anything he will in any writing which he may interpret as he will, by his own canons. For there is but one sound interpretation, and one honest critical question, which is, What did the writings mean to a contemporary who heard them or read them? 'Tis certain that the Hebrews who heard Isaiah's songs or prophesyings understood no reference to Jesus of Nazareth, no, nor to anyone 500 years forward.

But here now I come to a great point. If Jesus was so contrary to all the Jewish hopes and ideas, and such a mortification to the pride of them, how and why was he accepted by the Apostles, and by Paul, the greatest genius among them, with such implicit loyal faith and love? Consider how he shocked all their prejudices; and they never were a match for their prejudices. To the end I doubt not Jesus was a lonely man, because he was not understood even by his own disciples. When he was in the very shadow of the cross, they were disputing with each other who should have the pre-eminence in his kingdom, to be his prime minister when he should come into his power. The answer to the question, How was it that they accepted him in spite of these great mortifications, is this,—His moral and spiritual impression was so unspeakable! To the very end the disciples were looking for a grand manifestation from him; and still he disappointed them; and still they believed, because of his mighty spiritual force.

This, then, was the first mode of Paul's error as to the alleged

prediction of Jesus in the Old Scriptures. But his error in this matter was still a deeper one, for it lay in his going to the written word at all. Friends and brethren, why struggle with anguish of thought and weariness of soul over ancient writings of prophets, singers and law-givers, until they be twisted or stretched or hammered into the model of this present time? Oh how much better to read them as they were, the inspiration of their own eras, living and throbbing with its sorts of feelings and worships and prayers! But not rules nor bonds for us in this era. Why decipher writings, though they be sacred? Why weave patterns of thought from songs, though the songs be holy? Why turn back the eyes over roads long traversed and well trodden, though beaten pathetically they be with the feet of men long gone, and wondrous and tender with sights and associations,—why? I say,—when before us, and at our feet, lies also the same ancient way,—that portion which we are to tread for ourselves,—and a long way too, which perforce we must go in and cannot stay if we would! Tell me, shall we not go in it the better, the more safely and gladly, yea, and with songs, yea, and with prophesy on our lips, shall we not?—if our eyes be set forward like our feet, and about our feet where now they tread, that we may see and rejoice in the present glory, the providence, the presence of God! Here let me take my stand; for if God be not here now, I must tell you he was never anywhere; and if he fail me in my need, though I be the humblest and most unworthy and most struggling, yea, and most sinful, then did he never come to anyone though he were the holiest and the greatest. Nay, holy lips have said that there is more joy among the angels over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons made perfect; and if there be joy in the dwelling of God over the victory, then is he present help for the struggle. Here I must stand; and I must say the great Paul was still in the bonds of the letter, from which I do believe with all my soul that, if now he were here, he would be free. And if happily I be free from it, 'tis no triumph nor monument of mine, to be graved with my name, nor of any other, to be graved with his name; but a temple of God not made with hands, to be filled with songs of praise. Yes, here I stand, and to that temple I must come, and I must enter, not boldly, and yet with no

dread. What evil ever can happen to me if I seek the good? Prophets, law givers, psalmists and singers, saints and holy men of old, who lived on Carmel, filled the wilderness with prayer, preached in Jerusalem, and hurled the bolts of the word of the Lord at treacheries and wrongs, I read you, I reverence you, I sit at your feet; but ye make not my religion, no, but my religion, and every man's, as it was in the beginning, now is and ever shall be, made you; and I shall not know you, and your words will be but stammering oracles or wild syllables if first I know not for myself the same heart of religion which is in you. Herein again doth the Master, the Nazarene, tower far above his great disciple, as Renan has written truly: "To appear for a moment, to reflect a soft and profound refulgence, to die very young, is the life of a god. To struggle, dispute, and conquer, is the life of a man. After having been for three centuries, thanks to orthodox Protestantism, the Christian teacher *par excellence*, Paul sees in our day his reign drawing to a close. Jesus, on the contrary, lives more than ever. It is no longer the Epistle to the Romans which is the epitome of Christianity—it is the sermon on the Mount. \* \* \* What makes Christianity live, is the little that we know of the word and person of Jesus." This is because Jesus went first to the First; for God is first, and none can go to him second or through any other to learn what Jesus learned. He laid not the Old Scriptures on his head above him, as if piling them book on book therewith to be enlightened, till at last he was freighted with the heavy burden and went staggering over the earth; no, but he set the Scriptures, book on book, under his feet and climbed them, till standing on them, lifted far on their up-piled holiness, he could look with his eyes over the earth, see it, know it, and in it know the life of God. To his own soul he went, like as into a Holy of Holies. How often he could go therein, into the very inner place, who can tell? That great entrance was rare perhaps, as it was in the old ceremonial. Only once a year could the priest enter that sacred place. I know not whether it were so often as once a year, or but few times in thirty years, that the devout soul of Jesus found its way to the depths of itself. But it came out from that presence filled with divinity. Then he preached, not from the book, but from himself, and said that the pure in

heart should see God. What a certainty of nature is this! What fact! What assurance! Fathers and mothers, who together have looked on your children with wonder, with awe and love, all unspeakable, who each hath beheld himself in offspring and wondered much, and each hath beheld the other and wondered more, with love, and both of the wonderments full of religious fear,—tell me, do ye need writings wherewith to approach your children, or must one child give to another a writing that he may come to you? When were ye ever so far off that only through a verse, a scrip, a hope or thought or dream written down, your child could come to you? When were ye ever so much farther off that some humble one of your children could come to you only by a parchment from the hand of a greater one? Nay, when did they not fly to you all together, and directly with no intervention, yes, and the humblest, the slowest, the weakest first, the stronger making way for them that the more they might nestle in the father's arms or at the mother's heart, which were theirs by origin, by nature, by love and by their faith? Sit ye then thus, with your children close at your side and in your arms sheltered, and look ye up into the sky. There is the Infinite that bends over you, as the sky reaches down all around to the horizon, yea, and to our eyes rests on the earth and from its bright rim rears up the infinite arch of our abode. Stars play therein, and worlds without number, like children for very joy around him loud shouting and singing. Then cometh too a hush, which is Law, Love, Order, Perfection. Think of this; then turn thine eyes to man. As thou hast looked up to heaven, so now look down into the human heart which is spread like a sea underneath, wherein the stars shape themselves again if the waters be still, or are broken if the water strive in storms. What is the human heart? Who dare say he hath sounded it? Who dare describe it? Who dare tell what it is? Who hath measured around it? Who knoweth the power of its mysteries of love, of will, of joy and pain? Who hath written how these wrestle together and tear each other, or what peace lieth underneath them, to which the soul must go down at last, and there find the deep that calleth unto deep,—the deep of the earth, or of the child here placed, calling unto the deep of the heavens, or of the Father who is the heavens! Think of this, and then tell



me whether one of these hearts, though it be the struggling, tempted, erring, must have writings from another,—though it be calm and holy, before it may go straight and alone to the Infinite, the All-Holy, the Father? Must there be parchments from elders, prophets and sweet singers, before one soul shall know how to speak a prayer, or to pray what it can not speak? No. Whence is your love, ye fathers and mothers, who stretch out your arms and clasp closest the weakest, the most needy, the most frightened one of your children,—whence cometh that in you, but from God, who in like manner bendeth forward and hath naught between you and him!

“ My child is lying on my knees ;  
The signs of heaven she reads ;  
My face is all the heaven she sees,  
Is all the heaven she needs.

I also am a child, and I  
Am ignorant and weak ;  
I gaze upon the starry sky,  
And then I must not speak :

For all behind the starry sky,  
Behind the world so-broad,  
Behind men's hearts and souls, doth lie  
The Infinite of God.

Lo ! Lord, I sit in thy wide space,  
My child upon my knee ;  
She looketh up unto my face,  
And I look up to thee.”

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I come now to Paul's second point. The second great article of that faith of his which gave him such strength and devotion, was his belief in what is called the second coming, or second advent of Christ, The idea of a suffering and dying Messiah was the most fearful shock that the mind of a Jew could have received. And yet the moral and spiritual impression of Jesus triumphed over that too. Instead of seeing their great Master elevated, as they believed he would be, by some great popular

tumult, into a great reigning prince, re-establishing the kingdom in its ancient power and reigning in great glory, they saw him cut off by the most ignominious and painful death, on a Roman scaffold; and yet, I say, such had been his spiritual impression on them, that after a little, when the first shock and depression were over, and they came together again, they said, "Nevertheless, he *was* the Messiah!" And as they could not have a dead Christ, they dreamed a speedy second coming, and believed it implicitly. Paul's letters are full of it. "The time is short," he said, "the fashion of this world is passing away." In his letters to the Corinthians he says:

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."\*

And, again, to the Romans:

"Knowing the time, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."†

To the Thessalonians Paul writes:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we that are alive, that are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."‡ Paul argues that those who had died should be at no disadvantage by dying, because the Lord himself, he says, shall descend from heaven with an army and great glory, and first he will awake the faithful from their grave-bed, and then, all together, those that have been dead and those that still are living, shall be caught up to meet the Lord and his armies of angels in the air.

This was Paul's vivid dream. I doubt not at all that never

\*1 Cor. 15. †Rom. 13. ‡1 Thess. 4.

he went to sleep at night but he thought that, before the morning dawned by the natural light, might come the morning of the kingdom, with its trumpet tones and glory of angels in the sky.

But Paul was in error in this dream. The fact followed not his vision. No splendid advent like to what he conceived took place in the sky; no trumpet sounded, no angels gathered, no spirits descended, no legions of spirits armed themselves, no banners waved nor throne was set, no heralds called to judgment; nor were the nations gathered, nor saints came with rejoicing nor the guilty with trembling; but all has been quiet to this hour—the sentinel stars aloft, the commanding sun in front of them, the changeable moon at peace, the obedient tides following; and all has been quiet to this day, to this day peace, order and quiet. Truly the great Apostle saw but a little way; nay, no farther than to the curtain of his own fancies, which hung heavy over his eyes; so that he looked not out of the window to see the universe moving in its divinity of order.

Yet this mistake of Paul is not a mere vain dream, a necromantic thought, a magical vision. It has a truth in it, namely, that we are safe whatever take place; yea, even if such trumpets sound in the sky, such legions descend, such tumults and convulsions upheave, and such a throne issue from them as the Apostle dreamed, still we are safe; for what could harm us? And in truth we know not what may happen to this little ball that now so merrily trundles our daily fortunes. This earth was once, so it seems written in the sky, a ball of fire; yes, and not even this, but a fiery vapor or mist, spreading we know not where in the heavens. And how this mist came we know not. What if it were the burning sprinkle through space, as some astronomers say, of two cold globes somewhere rushing together in an embrace that became fire! If thus the earth were, so it may be again. Who knows of it, either whence it came or whither it goes, or now how far it is on its way to the goal? This is one of the countless multitudes of things, like sands on the seashore, which we know not nor can know; which, notwithstanding, all together are not of the grandeur, splendor and joyfulness of some of the few things that we do know. For to know that in every hap the love of God reigns, and that naught can harm us wherein our ruling principle is kept pure—this is the knowledge

which is the gate called Beautiful to the sheltered places of the City of Peace. So did the Apostle think, for in another place in the Scriptures, in the book called the Second Letter of Peter, there is a notable description of the last day of the present world and of the new coming of the Messiah which Paul was so wrapped in. Here follows the passage:

“But, beloved, forget not this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Like to this, wherein indeed the old poet had the Apostle's description in mind, is a noble pæan from a Provencal poet, translated by our poet, Bryant:

“All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away,  
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.  
The forms of men shall be as they had never been;  
The blasted groves shall lose their fresh and tender green;  
The birds of the thicket shall end their pleasant song,  
And the nightingale shall cease to chant the evening long.  
The kine of the pasture shall feed the dart that kills,  
And all the fair white flocks shall perish from the hills.  
The goat and antlered stag, the wolf and the fox,  
The wild boar of the wood, and the chamois of the rocks,  
And the strong and fearless bear, in the trodden dust shall lie;  
And the dolphin of the sea, and the mighty whale, shall die.  
And realms shall be dissolved, and empires be no more,  
And they shall bow to death who ruled from shore to shore;  
And the great globe itself, so the holy writings tell,  
With the rolling firmament, where the starry armies dwell,  
Shall melt with fervent heat—they shall all pass away,  
Except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye.”

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I come now to Paul's third point of faith. And I do believe this inspired him more greatly than the other two. It was what I may call his universalism. You know there arose a great quarrel in the first church. It was between the Jew Christians and the Gentile Christians. The Jew Christians said: "You Gentiles, before you can be Christians, first must submit to the Jewish law and ceremonies; for Christ came to the Jews; therefore you must come first under the Jewish rites and law; and then you can become a Christian." Paul said: "No! these are 'beggarly elements.' I will have none of them. Come in freely, without any foreign rites, ceremonies and obligations, ye Gentiles." The Jew believers thought Christianity a thing inside of Judaism; Paul made it a *movement*, pressing out of Judaism to the whole world. His letters are full of this thought, and all his life was devoted to it. He wandered up and down the face of the earth to preach it, and to clasp the Gentiles to his soul.

In his letter to the Romans the Apostle says that God will render to every man according to his works; that *they* will find life and honor who by patience and well-doing seek for it, and that on every soul that worketh evil shall come sorrow and pain, not more to the Jew than to the Greek; and glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, as much to the Greek as to the Jew; for "there is no respect of persons with God." For, says the Apostle, "Not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers of a law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have no law, do by nature the things of the law, these having no law, are a law unto themselves; in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith and their thoughts accusing or else excusing them one with another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."\* Who art thou? exclaims the Apostle, and what manner of man art thou? If thou art a Jew and gloriest in the law, and art instructed out of the law, and yet so dost dishonor the law by thy evil deeds that even the Gentiles profane the holy name because of thee, I tell thee that thy being a Jew and keeping the ceremonies is well if thou do the law; but if thou transgress, thy ceremonies and sacrifices are naught,

\*Rom. 2,



and the blood of Abraham is not in thee. And if one who is not a Jew and knows nothing of the temple rites, nor ever offered sacrifices, nor has submitted to ceremonies, does good works, shall not his Gentile blood be counted to him the same as Jew blood? Yea, though an alien, he shall be the same as a child of the chosen household. And if he, though not of the covenant, of the blood of Abraham, fulfill the law, I tell thee he shall judge thee who art Abraham's issue and doest evil. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

In an another letter, that to the Galatians, the Apostle assures them eloquently, that they are no longer under a tutor, nor are to be driven this way and that by any who may seek to pass them under the yoke of the law before they can be Christians. For ye are all sons, he says, and as many of you as have entered into the fold of Christ did thereupon put on Christ, so that no longer there can be Jew, nor Greek, nor bond, nor free, nor male, nor female, nor any differences whereby men are parted; but all are one in the fold of Christ. And if then ye belong to him, cries the Apostle, what is this but to be the same as the very seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise that was given him. And again in the 8th chapter of the Letter to the Romans, a very noble and great chapter, the Apostle tells them that as many as are led by the spirit of God are the sons of God; and that they must not be drawn into any bondage, to be fearful about ceremonies, or sacrifices, or names, or any outward things, but receive the spirit of adoption; for their very souls bear witness within them, and the voice of God within their souls, that they are the children of him. And if children, then heirs, as much as his Hebrew children, yes, and joint heirs with the Messiah himself, if they be willing to suffer with him, that with him also they may be glorified. If then thus ye Gentiles are called and God hath chosen you, as in truth he hath done from the beginning, and doth ordain you to be called in his own time, even as also he called the Jews—if then thus God is for you, who can be against you? Who can lay anything to your charge before him whereby to turn you away? Nay, hath not his son,

even Jesus the Christ, died, and now, being raised and ascended, maketh intercession? "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."\*

Wherefore, cries the Apostle, in still another letter, to the Ephesians—Wherefore you Gentiles that once seemed afar off, now are made nigh, for Christ hath broken the middle wall of the partition and abolished the old enmity, even by his own flesh, having brought the Jew and the Gentile together into one body through the cross, and by his cross slain the enmity. And he preached peace to you that are far off as much as peace to them that were nigh, for both have access in one spirit to the same Father. So I tell you ye are not mere strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens, and of the household of God. And ye are made all together, Jew and Gentile, into a holy temple in the Lord, builded together for a habitation for God.

In writing to the Galatians he warns them with great feeling that he fears they are losing the life of the spirit and being brought to sacrifices, ceremonies and rules, under the Jewish law. Away with such things! he cries to them; they were fit only for your time of bondage, when as yet ye were outside and knew not your sonship. But now that ye have come to know, "how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."†

Here was Paul's great truth. Oh, sometimes how must the most timid soul wish there were a Paul now to say these words to us, to our faithless, fearful churches, that have no confidence in truth, but must hedge round their thoughts by creeds and ex-

\*Rom. 8. †Gal. 4.

clusions! Herein lay no error. Paul might err in explaining written texts, and reason falsely from them, as he did, against the laws of language and history; he might err in his dreams of blazing splendors at the Lord's coming in the sky; but in his all-embracing humanity and fellowship he builded on a rock. This wide and great doctrine of Paul, that the great good news of Jesus' life and devotion was not for the Jews only, but for the world, to be preached to the Gentiles—this, I say, because it was so great and wondrous a proclamation, brought him into great perils, yes, and sufferings of body continually during his years of toilsome journeys to preach his great Gospel. Wherever he went he preached, even in the synagogues, that Christianity was not a new sect of Jews, nor for Jews alone, no, but a wide religion, and for all mankind. But when he said such things, then the Jews set upon him, drove him from their synagogues time and again, reviled him, spurned him, beat him and stoned him, even pursuing him out on the highways between city and city, and leaving him for dead by the roadside. Once when he was in Jerusalem, some Jews of Asia Minor who happened to be there, recognized him as the troublesome, heretical, and seditious preacher who had made light of the laws and in their very synagogues opened his arms to the Gentiles. Whereat they stirred up the people and made a great outcry, shouting, Help, men of Israel! This is the man whom we found in our cities teaching against the law! And we read that "all the city was moved, and the people ran together, and they laid hold on Paul and dragged him out of the temple. And forthwith the doors were shut. And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And immediately he took soldiers and centurians, and ran down upon them. And when they saw the chief captain and soldiers, they left off beating Paul. Then the chief captain came near and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains, and inquired who he was and what he had done. And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd; and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd. For the multitude

of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.”\* But when Paul thus was carried by the soldiers up the stairs he begged leave of the officer to speak, and so standing on the stairs beckoned with his hand and began to speak, not in Greek, but in Hebrew, the holy and ancient tongue, and the angry mob stood silent to listen. Whereupon Paul told them who he was and where born, and how at the feet of their rabbins he had been instructed strictly in the law, and that he was very zealous and had followed the new company of Christians with fire and sword. Then he narrated to them what had happened to him on the road to Damascus, and the blindness wherewith he was struck, and the manner in which he was healed of it; and then, at last, he spoke out bravely that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “Depart, for I will send thee forth from hence unto the Gentiles.” And, says the Scripture, they gave him audience unto this word, but then when he spake of going to the Gentiles, they shouted with a great outcry, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! It is not fit that he should live!” And they shouted and roared and threw their garments off, and cast dust into the air. Paul, in truth, had been a notable Jew, as he had told the people, and had gone raging up and down the land, beating the Christians and throwing them into prison, and had stood consenting to the death of Stephen; but when at last he believed, and embraced the new Gospel, then it was not as a Jew taking the new evangel into his old narrowness, as if he patched an old garment with new cloth, or put new wine into old goat-skins. No, but as a new man he took his new faith, not as a Jew, but as a man; and hence not for the Jews but for all men he opened his arms, to gather them all in, because God had made of one blood all the nations of the world, to walk on the face of the earth, and was not far from any one of them. Paul rescued his glorious Master from the hard fate of phrophets, which is that they soon become themselves tyrants like unto those they overthrow. For soon they that speak out of their own spirit, as Jesus did, and call on all men to do the same and to learn where they learned, which is in the holy quiet of their own souls,—soon these, I say, are set aloft by their disciples and crowns put on them that they may

\*Acts. 21.

be adored with submission; and soon then they become law-givers instead of inspirers, and their disciples grow to a stern priesthood who put other men to fire and sword in their names. How did Luther wrestle with his followers that they should do even as he had done, and warned them that they were not to call themselves after him! Yet so, notwithstanding, would they do, and did; and now they are hardened into a sect which needs another Luther to overthrow the first and purge his work of tyranny. Paul stood like a bulwark for a time, yes, like a great wall that no thunders could shake and no lightnings of men's hatred shatter, in front of his Master, to shield him from the hard fate of being no more than the leader of another Jewish sect. When at last Paul was gone, and the apostles were gone, and all slept that knew the Master, the Jews scattered, their city sacked and burned, and their law a by-word and reproach, then, alas, the gospel of Jesus did become a tyranny; yes, and the very epistles of Paul a like tyranny, which helped to set the stones of the walls of the church to keep out Jews and all heretics and set bound again to the love of God. But the *spirit* of Paul wrestles with this bondage of the letter, as of old he did; and again he shall triumph, as of old he did; and again the universal truth and the human fellowship which was in him shall rescue the Master from sects and clans, from creeds, churches, sectaries, and all bondage of the letter, as of old it did; and once more man shall know that neither principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall separate man from the love of God, nor shall part men from one another, for that they are of one family in that love. What impiety greater than to bound the grace and love of God? Oh! how unspeakably vain it seems, how hard to conceive it, that any will think to bound the grace of God, shutting it profanely into one fold with gates of men's devices, or sealing it with one name or creed or church or method; as if men (I say it reverently) would label God with their titles, or mark the wolves and jackals of their bitter passions with the name of the Great Shepherd.

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Thus I have tried to set forth, though by necessity briefly, these points of Paul, two errors and one truth. They all survive. Still the people are going to the writings, to the parchments, to the letter, for arguments, in all the churches. I know there are bursts and throbs of coming freedom, the freedom of the spirit within us,—God be thanked! And yet, still there are exclusions, hatreds, persecutions; and men go to the parchments for their religion. Still, also, many are looking for the second coming, and their sad hearts are spelling it out from the figures in Daniel. But, too, there are many successors to Paul, and many through the ages, never so many as now, striving to break down the partition walls, and bring men to one fold—howsoever they differ in forms, no matter—by the unity of the spirit. It is remarkable that the two errors are warring with the one truth, for it is the argument from the letter, from the scriptures, and the Messiah-dream of a miraculous Lord and King, that separate men.

The two errors shall be done away, the truth shall stay and grow. Gradually these grand scriptures, this glorious great Bible, so misused, and yet able to be so valuable and precious to us, shall cease to rule over man's reason, and then it will be the friend of his soul. Gradually the holy Nazarene will cease to be a Lord expected again with blare of trumpets and armed angels in the sky; and then he will be the wayfaring friend and teacher of men, a "quickenings spirit." And the truth of the great heart of Paul, the all-embracing humanity, the love, *that* shall prevail; and the earth will become a new Eden, men will walk new-made in the garden, nor will fear each other, nor any creature fear them, nor ravage any more. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play at the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."\*

\*Isaiah ix.



## KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

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I have a difficult subject this morning; not difficult in itself, but to treat in such language and manner I fear as may recommend it to you. I have tried faithfully to keep in mind that I shall speak to those who at present are not acquainted with the technical language of the schools. Particularly I have tried to regard the younger portion of the congregation. I hope I may not fail altogether in bringing the subject to their minds and hearts. I once preached to a congregation where they had the habit of stopping the minister to ask questions whenever they wished. A somewhat dangerous privilege; yet not too dangerous, I think, if only we could escape from vanity and self-consciousness—that is to say, if we could ask questions born of the humility, and not of the arrogance, of thought. But, though this custom obtains not here, I should be willing enough to have it, especially in such a subject as this, wherein I fear that without knowing it I may fall short of that plainness which certainly I aim at.

What I have to say I will bring before you by a story, or allegory. There was a shepherd, sitting in the midst of his flocks, in a hilly and barren country. Looking about him, he asked himself where were the signs of the king? What proof have I, quoth he, or what signs that there is a king reigning in this country? Him I never see. His messengers never reach me. And, in truth, I must say this is but a stony and poor piece of ground for the king to leave as it is, if, indeed, he be reigning and in power. Now, while the shepherd was talking thus to himself, reasoning, behold, he saw coming in the distance

some swift runners; and one after another, at slight intervals, they came dashing past him, plainly couriers bent on some urgent command. Whereupon, the shepherd reasoned again thus: Who be these fast runners that I see speeding past me in this manner? Surely these must be of great moment and pressed by business of great import, they hurry so much, and seem in so great earnestness. Now, perhaps, quoth the shepherd, they come from the king. Yes, that is the only explanation. They are the couriers speeding from the king on some great errand. Whereupon, the simple heart of the man was satisfied, and he rested very content in this proof that there was a king. But soon, as he looked on the messengers as they came past, he began to notice that many of them were very shabbily clad; indeed, much travel-worn and stained with their journey. So he began to reason again that surely they could not come from the king, being so ill-clad and so ill-kept. For if from a great monarch they came, they would be clothed in a manner equal to their office, reflecting glory on their Lord. So the shepherd fell again into his discontent, and wondered whether there was a king after all. But noticing again the couriers as they ran, he saw them doing what at first had escaped his notice, because no one had done it quite before his eyes, or just in front of him; he noticed, I say, that as they ran they appeared to be taking off their journey-stained clothing, tearing away from them their poor garments torn and ragged, and putting on others that they seemed to be carrying with them; yea, even in some strange way making and preparing them as they ran. As they put on these new garments, they became, indeed, rich and comely in their bearing, in appearance worthy of a great monarch. Thereupon, the shepherd fell to reasoning again, and said: If belike these messengers come not from a king, since they come so ill-dressed and so shabby, yet they are going to a king, for I see they are making themselves fit for royal presence. Therefore the king is. And, again, the honest shepherd was content, and rejoiced in his heart.

This story I tell because it is like a saying of Goethe. That poet said: "If there be not a God now, there will be some day." A very notable saying. The German poet differed from others by this saying, in forecasting the issue of development, instead

of ransacking nature to understand its source. The aim of the movement, and prophecy of it, seemed to him as great and stable a point for faith and joy, as though he could perceive the source of it. For if the starting point, the setting out of all this great panoply of things, how they came to be together, and to be well measured in their places in the race and struggle for life, seemed doubtful, the common aim of them all appeared very plain, that they were all journeying to a royal grandeur, to a divine completeness.

If there be anything in the soul's instinctive idea of the infinite, surely it can mean no less than this, that nothing can be added, and nothing taken away; that there never was less than now, and never more, nor can be; that no atom can be added to being, and no quality to nature; that whether by development or any other manifestation, the quality, nature, attribute that will be, is simply the coming then into our perception of the quality, the nature, the attribute that now is; that whatever may be manifestly the tendency or aim of the universal motion, is so because already it is the nature of that which moves.

I am used to delight much in the old Gnostic term, *Pleroma*, roundness, fullness; the fullness in which lies the possibility of the actual, and the ordained actuality of all possibilities; the fullness from whose being all things proceed, in order to develop evermore unto its nature.

Always the ecstasy of my own sense of being projects itself for me on earth and sky. Therewith arises in me the absoluteness of my moral intuitions, the uncompromising eternal necessity of the OUGHT, as well, too, as the soaring certainty of the pure reason. When I have bathed in these, I come consciously into the presence of the being which is the ground of the connection and participation of all stars and their peoples in the necessities of my conscience, and of the thoughts which start in me. Hence it is that the life within me has clothed itself with this absolute within me, in order to teach me that I am not born of two parents merely, or of any time, but of the universe and of eternity. The life which pours within me to keep up my pulse, which enters at the eye to quicken that pulse when a terror or a joy confronts my vision, opening the portal of any sense, nay, being sense itself, and then thrilling into an idea, or



palpitating in the rapture of a thought,—that is the same life which undulates, waves, ascends, descends, circulates, blooms, in the related mysteries of light, sound, water, atmosphere, earth, tinting the summer's cloud, murmuring in the clash of the silex edges of grass-blades, turning the monstrous sun, and still vaster globes, on their axes, and then bringing down, as if obedient to me, and laying forth for me on a cotton screen the spectral chemistry of a star's atmosphere.

We come, when thus we study ourselves, to think of that wonder which we name personality—our personality. And I hesitate not to say that it is the personality of God which is the being of my personality, of my identity, of my consciousness of myself. I say not that I know how to express to you, nay, nor to myself, the personality of God; and, above all, I mean not individuality. But what if I can not define? What then? As saith a noble discourse, “What then if God be incomprehensible? Is it necessary to comprehend what infinite love is, in order to comprehend that the very substance of our being is mysteriously identified with whatsoever love in its essence means?”\* Is it needful, in like manner I say, to comprehend what infinite personality is, in order to feel the soul quickening and thrilling with a kindred inexplicableness, a mysterious identity with whatsoever personality in its essence means? To be “incomprehensible” is not to be “unknown” or “unknowable;” for there is nothing but touches in many points on the infinite, wherein it can not be comprehended. Nay, everything touches in all points on the infinite; if we seem to comprehend any thing, this is only because we co-ordinate it with other finite phenomena, which thus cover, I may say, their common mystery with a little cosmos of their own, having few and secondary relations.

But here stands, you will say to me, the old trial-difficulty; you are anthropomorphic.

Very many persons think they have spoken immense wisdom and extinguishing logic, when they utter the word anthropomorphic. Anthropomorphic means, in the form of a man, like to a man; and they say, if we speak of the personality of God, we thereby make him like to a man. They say to me, You teach

\* Samuel Johnson, in *The Radical*; vol. vii, p. 265.

no idea of God, but only of a very great human being; and by reason of the nature of human faculties, this is all that can be taught. The uninstructed yearnings of the heart set their burning fervor behind your faculties, and throw the shadow of them on the sky, and out of that shadow you carve the Deity. That is their claim. Well, let us take a near view of this. It has no frightful power to me. Of all places in the world, the pulpit is the place in which not to be afraid of anything. Let us ask what anthropomorphism is.

Is anthropomorphism the ascribing to God of the nature of man? Well, if not in God, tell me how and whence that nature came into man? Whatever appears in the constitution of the finite, was first and eternally in the nature of the infinite. If this be anthropomorphism, I have no wish to shrink from it; because there can be no other reason for anything in man's constitution, than that it is in the source of man, in the being of his being. Wherefore, if I be asked how it is possible to ascribe to the infinite any finite nature, or thought, or any exercise, I ask how it is possible *not* to ascribe the nature of all things to that whose unfolding or manifestation all things are?

But here I come to what I conceive to be the secret of this charge of anthropomorphism, and the opening out or explanation of it. It is so necessary to ascribe all things to the infinite, that anthropomorphism, that is, man-likeness, truly considered, is just the not doing so, but the ascribing somewhat to the nature of man alone. In other words, anthropomorphism consists, not in ascribing our fundamental nature or traits to God, but in not also, and in unity therewith, ascribing all other natures and traits to him. But a finite nature is not a false, but only a partial manifestation of the infinite, and the finite becomes infinite nature so soon as it is gathered in with all other manifestations.

Here, because I can not go forward another step otherwise, I will ask you to look with me for a moment at the meaning of the words *analysis* and *synthesis*. The one is to separate or divide anything into its parts; this is to analyze. To synthesize is to take the parts, or the constructing elements, and put them together to make the object. For example, suppose we wish to

show the construction of a watch by analysis, we should then take it all apart mechanically, and lay its springs, its wheels, its balances, its cogs, its different kinds of metal and its jewels, all apart, each in its separate place. But if we wished to show the construction of that watch by synthesis, we should then assemble together all these various parts, and put them into place in the watch, and hold it up to the eye as a finished, collected, and completed object. Thus you see that analysis and synthesis are modes of defining and examining the nature of anything. Analysis shows what the thing is by showing its parts. Often, in order to do this, it is necessary to destroy the object; but that interferes not with analysis. Synthesis, on the other hand, shows or defines what an object is by taking the parts and making of them the object, or by showing the object in its wholeness without reference to its parts. To illustrate: Suppose I wish to define a flower, let us say a gentian, by analysis. I should, thereupon, pull off from its stem the cup or tube of it, and proceed to show that that by itself was a part of the flower, fringed at its edges. I should then show how the stamens, also being parts by themselves, were inserted in the flower, and call your attention to the other parts, the ovary, style, stigma, filaments, anthers, calyx, until, by all these particulars, you had become acquainted with the flower by analysis. But now suppose I wished to do the same work by synthesis. Then I should try to describe to you the flower as it would look to your eye and come before you as for feeling and as a unit, not consisting of parts, but of parts gathered into the unit in which you behold it. It is synthetic account alone that shows any object in its living reality. If, for example, you would see the difference, read the botanical description of the Fringed Gentian, in any hand-book of botany, where you will find it described by analysis,—Lobes of the four-cleft calyx unequal, ovate and lanceolate, as long as the bell-shaped tube of the sky-blue corolla, the lobes of which are wedge-obovate and strongly fringed around the summit, four-lobed, regular; pod oblong, two-valved, one-celled, with two parietal placentæ, ovary free from the calyx; stamens as many as the lobes of corolla and alternate with them. But thus the poet Bryant synthetizes, in his poem "To the Fringed Gentian:"

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,  
And colored with the heaven's own blue,  
That openest when the quiet light  
Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean  
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen,  
Or columbines, in purple dressed,  
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,  
When woods are bare and birds are flown,  
And frosts and shortening days portend  
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye  
Look through its fringes to the sky,  
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall  
A flower from its cerulean wall.

If now I have made plain this difference, though so very briefly, between the art of defining by analysis, with which goes destruction, and the defining by synthesis, which shows the unity of life, let me apply it to my subject. The life of God is infinite: it comprehends the most tremulous nebulous light which the wide-mouthed telescope barely focalizes, the intolerable radiance of enormous suns and the momentum of their gross masses, the surface secrets of the stars, and the mysteries equally inscrutable of microscopic life on a square-millionth inch of the earth's breast. Now, in all these manifestations, there seem to be what I may call foci of consciousness. We are such; feeling creatures, in whom God develops intelligence, which has the power to turn an observant eye outward and inward, and by the analytic process to cut off ourselves and all other things, as little units in thought, as now I separate them from the ongoing manifestation, which is the perfect indivisible infinite. This isolation is what I mean by finiteness. It comes from analyzing, that is, from taking the whole by its parts and viewing each part by itself. And this is the necessary mode of mind in consciousness dawning in the manifestation of another consciousness; for it is involved in the very notion of thinking of ourselves, that we must separate and divide ourselves from what contains us. The analytic process is a necessity to us; it is indeed ourselves. We may synthetize or unify in our little domain; nay, by our mysterious sympathy with our source of being, we are constrained to do this, yes, and to find the highest

joy we know in this pursuit of The One in the Many; but we never can soar to that divine synthesis which would include ourselves, because discrimination is but another term for our very knowledge of ourselves, nay, for our very being.

Analysis must always remain the root of every mental process, the hidden familiar of every pursuit of unity. Analysis has no limits. The reason is, that it is the very essence of our being. The mind may pulverize the universe, and detach it crumb by crumb for isolated contemplation, because, as I say, the analytic process is the very fiber of our own being. But on the road to unity, to that synthesis which is God, we can go but a very little way. Soon we must shade our eyes, and stop through very excess of light. To merge all things in synthesis as we can crumble all in analysis, would be to unite ourselves in thought with our own source of life, in division and separation from which our consciousness consists, yea, of which the soul, as a derived being, ever must remain in uncreative ignorance. "In nothing," says the discourse that I have quoted, "is the inadequacy of the merely analytic process shown more conclusively than in its dealings with things spiritual in the interest of science. It never reveals truth in its divine form of life. To dissect, it must destroy. It can not see any elements of existence *as existent*; for each lives in its active relations to the others. Analysis, however useful in its way, slays this beautiful unity in which power and life dwell. There is left a heap of dead fibres and organs; and what resemblance is there to the living body when you have put these together again?" \*

Now, anthropomorphism is to project analysis on God. It does not mean to ascribe to him, or to judge of him by, any power of mine, or of any being, for this is a mental necessity, and nothing is conceivable otherwise. But it means the not ascribing to him also of all traits of all beings at once in one indivisible unity; for God is the real synthesis of all the things that thrill in thought. No trait of nature in me limits him, unless I ascribe it to him apart from that vital unity in which he lives it and is it; and *this* would be to limit him because instead of merging humanity with all natures in him, I then

\*The Radical, vol. vii, p. 261.



should isolate God into humanity. Our circumstances circumscribe us; but God's circumstances are all things, even our circumscription. The Infinite Life, the Infinitely Personal, can not be separated nor compared, nor in any way divided by sense or mind from the universal Whole of Manifestation, since everything reveals and nothing in its place misrepresents him. The difficulty, the impossibility, is to take the whole and form one conception from the vast manifold.

We can scarcely fashion to ourselves the least idea of the nature of a dog's consciousness, or of that of any being unendowed with language. But God is vocal in us, voiceless in the dog; and we are not guilty of deifying our own being when we ascribe to God whatever nature utters speech, yea, and the speaking of the speaking nature, if we also merge with it in him whatever soul is speechless. This can not be comprehended in its completeness, because by the necessities of our nature, synthesis in our minds can never be perfect. But I say it is sufficient for love and joy. It is knowledge of God none the less true for its limitations, since it is exact and right to affirm our whole nature of him, though we know not how this appears when it lives in God in vital indivisible unity with all else whatsoever. It is right to say God lives, God thinks, God acts. He acts, but he is the action of activity and the inaction of inactivity, and both at once in vital unity indivisible. The deftest play of the musician's fingers exists in vital oneness with the immovableness of mountains or stars in him. He thinks; but the most intricate triumphs of reason are one in him with the mysterious dawn of intelligence, with the inscrutable instinct of the spider which awaits classification. He loves, but inclusive of the indifference of some female fishes, and of the tenderest human maternity. "God," says Luther, "exists wholly in every grain of sand, and yet, at the same time, in, above and beyond all creatures. \* \* \* Nothing is so small, but that God is still smaller; nothing so great but that God is still greater; nothing so short but that God is still shorter; nothing so long but that God is still longer; nothing so broad but that God is still broader; nothing so narrow but that God is still narrower." And so with personality. God is person; in simple reality and truth, person, as we are. But is not this, you will say, perhaps,

to call him simply human?—a very great man, but only man? And is it any better than what the Grecian philosophers charged on other pagans, that if lions or oxen could worship, they would take a lion or ox for their god, a very great lion, but still a lion? Ah! here is the sublime mystery which rescues both, and leaves us with the Father,—that *the lion is right* and the man is right. God is anthropomorphic, and leomorphic, man-like and lion-like, in the infinity of his omni-morphism. It is the truth of both which saves each, and makes the idea of each a reflection of a spiritual reality in God, wherein the personal and impersonal, and whatsoever may be higher than personal of which we dream not—if there be aught such; I know not,—exists, not in mixture, but in the indivisible perfection of one eternal life.

Wonderful, heavenly, and yet simple as the babe's heart, appears the inference from all this concerning our knowledge of God. This inference and truth is, that we know him, not only as much as we know anything, but more. There is naught in life so known to us as the eternal stream of life, God. Only in their flight to unity in his bosom do any facts whatever let fall on the soul the mantle of their meaning. If by the analyzing quality of our being, we divide, separate, isolate, pulverize something in order to know it the more perfectly, when we have done this and cut it off from God, behold, there is naught to it, naught left to know. It is only in its synthesis with all else whatsoever, that any being or thing, telescopic or microscopic, distills the drop of its living meaning. "All true science," says Ruskin, "begins in the love, not the dissection of your fellow creatures; and it ends in the love, not the analysis, of God."

I have stood before a beautiful landscape in summer, and winter too, where the level meadow, with trees, river, hills climbing on their shadows, have blended in vast modest magnificence; and thus confronted, I have asked myself again and again, *Does* God now appear pressing on my sight? Like the old Oriental sage, I would say, if I could, "I see him with my eye." *Does* he appear there before my soul, now all wrought into vision? As often as I have viewed the sublimity as God lives it, *all at once*, in the ecstasy of my consciousness of it more than in any detailed sight, the syllabled affirmation of my answer was

faint to express the unspeakable depth and sincerity of the soul's conviction. God appeared to me just so long as I took the scene into my soul as a unit of beauty. So far as my eye could reach, he was there, living that unity of beauty and life. But he disappeared so soon as I took the elements, the rock, the tree, the flower, into the laboratory of analysis, and began to test them with reagents for divinity. I stood once on the shores of a lake on which the sun was casting setting rays of gold and crimson. Two persons said, "Let us sail out into that color which lies so gloriously on the water." But when they had sailed to the spot, they understood their folly; the color was as far beyond them as before on the surface of the water, away off; and yet to the eyes of the persons on the shore, there they were, bathed in the full glory of it. So, when we go after a place, so I may say, of the glory of God, not knowing that there is no one place, but all is full thereof, when we come to that place, we find it not as we thought; yet to those who are looking after us, and see us in the whole, we are bathed in the glory of the light which our own eyes behold not.

Meantime, there is no mystery in God which has not its corresponding mystery in us. His existence? There is our own being, which is simply a poise over a profound abyss of consciousness inexplicable. His mode of activity? There is the inscrutable mystery of our own will, which is all we know of any activity. His uniform law joined with his personal freedom? There is the equivalent sense and mystery of our liberty over against the strict laws of human movement which history displays. His eternity? There is the related mystery of time; for to our analytic consciousness, beginning and no beginning are equally inconceivable. His infinity? There is space, in which we move, which stretches before us infinitely, involved in that very analysis which is our being. His absolute and necessary nature? There are the answering intuitions of the pure reason, and above all, the imperative necessity of the moral command, the absolute authority of the OUGHT.

These are all human mysteries, and all divine mysteries, nor could they be human if not divine, nay, nor divine if not human.



## WHY ANY RELIGION?

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Why any religion? What reasons for religion? Not why this religion, or that, is better than some other; not why I shall prefer one doctrine or system of thought; but why religion itself, any religion, is good.

To answer this question there are three general methods.

I might try to answer first, by studying the origin of religion. This would be the historical method of answering the question. It is a good method. By it I should try to show the origin and growth of religion in the evolution of the faculties of human nature within the facts of human life. Thus, by indeed but simply reading the pages of human experience, I might show the need of religion to human life, its office to the soul of man, and its truth and divinity, as naturally unfolding in human experience.

Again, for the second method, I might strive to answer the question by showing the usefulness of religion. This would be the experimental or utilitarian manner. This method, too, is not without its value. By no means I would despise it. Yet it seems to me to have been treated sadly, and to have fallen indeed into very bad company and ill-usage; for it has been made the foundation of the salvation-doctrine, as the answer to the question, Why any religion?—the answer, namely, that religion is good because it offers an escape for mankind from the evils of his destiny, and the changing of them for good things; that is to say, to escape from hell, and to gain heaven. I shall spend no time over this answer to the question, because I think no one is hearing me this morning for whom it is not far bygone, long dropped by the wayside, yes, perhaps so far back in our ex-



perience that hardly we can remember ever being perplexed or tried in spirit by this ancient gross answer to our question.

There is, however, another way in which we may speak of the usefulness of religion, a right and salutary way. Sometime ago I had a conversation with a young man who has been a warm and valued friend for many years. It so warmed my heart that I thought at the time I would bring it into the pulpit for you, as a bit culled right out of life, an experience laid directly at the door of my mind, and therefore, perhaps, fresh and useful for you. I had not talked with him much for many years (he was a friend of my youth), and, meantime, he had engaged in a large business, which had been successful. He was now at the head of a business house ample in its returns, more than abundantly rich in this world's goods. But he came to me to ask some counsel, and also to make some proposals regarding reading for himself. He said to me: "My friend, during these many years of close devotion to business, I have learned one thing of more advantage to me than all else that I have learned, and a dearer result of my experience than all the gains of property that I have made; this it is, that unless I keep my hold firmly on the spiritual, by and by I shall lose my hold also on the material. I mean," he said, "putting it now on the lowest basis that I can, not speaking of the great beauty of thoughts, the elevation of spiritual ideas, the poetry and religion of life, but on its lowest plane, I mean that I can not be so good a business man if I attend not to the cultivation of myself in soul. This," said he, "has been borne in on me more and more as I have faced the danger of so being absorbed in my business as to weaken my spiritual hold. Yes, I have been startled to find that unless I held hard to the heavens, I could not, in my daily work on the earth, be so successful, so wise, or so far planning. Now this," he said to me, "is not the highest ground on which to put the usefulness or value of religion, of poetry, of the prophet's dreams, the Psalmist's visions; nevertheless, it is a true ground, and for that reason alone, if for no other, I wish to keep to the source of spiritual life, and know the aids to maintain it."

This I think wise, noble, salutary, well worthy to be called a reason for religion. Let us call it, as my friend did, one of

the lower reasons; but whatever reason is valid is not to be despised. It is a great and happy thing to see that if indeed simple religion be taken into the mind truly, purely, not as a salvation scheme, but as an inward elevation, inspiration, fervor, life must become wiser, grander in its sweep, the intelligence be broadened, man made more unselfish, business more truthful and noble, which means more productive in all ways, especially of happiness, politics no longer greedy and scandalous, and men no longer sellers of strong drink to degrade and ruin others for gain. Indeed, we shall see gentleness, happiness and peace on the earth when this religion dwells with us, nor men any longer brutal to women, nor women harsh to men, and home the abode of kindly offices and affectionate consideration. If thus true religion make all life better and nobler, truly I say it is an honest reason why religion should be, why we should cleave to it, and why this church should be builded.

We must remember, too, that vital religious truths in the heart keep us in communication with nature, and with the ways of providence. My friend might have added, perhaps it was in his mind indeed, as one of the means by which spiritual thoughts broadened his intelligence, that the spirit thus is attuned to the works of God, and therefore vibrates with them. I ask you this question, How shall you walk well on this earth, and profitably either for soul or for body, if you be at variance with the earth in spirit? How shall you use nature to your good if you be alien to the facts, the spirit and life that is in nature? But with religion we shall enter nature's beauty, gladness, riches, life, we shall behold the order of God's creation, which is maintained in the creatures of that creation, and we shall be filled with peace and power by harmony with that order. We shall learn to know everywhere a certain life; I say things will seem living to us if we have this religion in us. The wind, the rain, the sea, the shining starry night, are but moving bits of a wondrous and infinite life which shall press on us with great moment and power and glory. Movements of nations, too, yea, the very sailing of ships, the inventions of men, all the wonderful providences of history, will be to us a living unfolding of Infinite Life and Power and wondrous Love.

Is not religion, then, of mighty interest and value, if thus

its presence in the soul keep us face to face with the Father in the works?

Religion, also, from this point, this answer by its usefulness, is that which shields us in the hour of temptation. We all are tried. Who of you has not his temptations? Who is not more liable to some errors than others? Sometimes very weak on one side, or, at least, not knowing your own strength there which you might know, tempted by wicked counsels without, by restless struggling feelings within? But religion is man's consciousness of the Infinite and Eternal Holiness over him. In the hour of temptation when the strength almost is gone—for never it wholly goes, but almost is gone,—and the fierce importunity of gain or passion has us in its grip, then this religion may be the anchor of strength,—to feel about us the holiness of God, and to think of it. Then the earth is a temple and we enter it. Many a man who has not strength standing upward, becomes a giant on his knees. We *can* turn away from evil, if only for a little; but if it be little enough to lift the eye, lo! we see with that eye the Holy Spirit, and a face looks out on us, if it be a face we seek. We feel the abiding strength, life, beauty, all about us, and then we can forsake that evil because in that company it hath become foreign, and of us no more.

Again, for the third method, I might answer my question by an attempt to define and study the nature of religion. This is the philosophical manner. Of this I will say naught here, save that I have no displeasure with the method. It is right and well that we reason of all that belongs to us, that we question what the root of religion is in reason, that we ask what the facts of nature, as science unfolds them, have to say to religion, and religion to them. But this I pass over now, and say simply this, if any ask me, "Why any religion?"—simply this, that—Here it is! We are with it! It is with us! There are some things which it is right and well for the mind that we reason on, to justify them by process of thought, or by studying the facts; and yet, after we have done that, hardly have we added to them any authority, weight, power, since all their power is that *here they are*, with us, a great and glorious possession, and all their authority that they belong by nature to the human soul. We can give no reason why music, painting, poetry, are of

worth and great effect to us, no reason, I say, so good as simply that here they are, and always have been, in the beginning, now, and ever to be, great benisons from the past, wondrous blessings in the present, and prophecies that hold the future in keeping. We find them joy and beauty to us; and beauty, as Emerson says to the flower in the wilderness, "is its own excuse for being." To these great arts, and all that makes life glorious, we have but to say, that he that brought them here brought us. So to us they belong, because we with them belong to that Power and Goodness; and that is their sanction. So it is with love and trust and hope. And when these take on them a grand form, and grow into all that they may come to in human life, they become religion; but after they have become religion, love, trust and hope are as little to be crowned by any argument as before, when they were the tender springings of the human heart in human fellowships. Simply then, I say, here is religion with us, expressing our highest being. Wherefore if I be asked "Why any religion?"—rather would I, than try to tell why, say that there is no question, nor anything to be questioned or asked; but that here it is in us, and no more driven to give a reason for itself, or warrant itself by argument, than is that reason which asks a reason. To be religious, is simply to be our true selves, and never are we our true selves unless this holy somewhat, which sometimes we know not how to speak or write, nay, never quite truly, sometimes not at all, glows deeply and sacredly in the spirit. For whatever may be said of us, however we came here, or wherever we go, it is sure that now we are the children of the Source of all, and made too in his image by just so much as we have the thought of him. Are we not then our true selves when this flames up in us, and then over us into the heavens, into prayers, to seek its source as all flame must?

Consider how important it is that all things here, all beings, should be what they were meant to be, to unfold themselves according to the ideas written within them. What famine and suffering spread if corn be blasted in the ear, not being what it is meant to be. Only as creatures fulfill their nature, the proper nature of God and his purpose is wrought out in them, and the beauty, symmetry and order of this creation, which is his ap-

pearance, is unrolled. How past all speaking, then, the need that man, the chief of these works, the work among them that looks forth with consideration on all the other works, the child of the Father, the thinking one, the being who understands that mystic syllable *ОУГНТ*, that he, I say, should unfold him self-gloriously as he was meant to be, that each may see the light of heaven, yea, I would say, the reflection of the face of God, in a brother's eye, and the presence of God in every chastened spirit and holy life; and that the earth may complete itself in beauty, to be finished in the spiritual loveliness of its highest being, wherein yet it waits to be finished.

Religion so concerns the whole of life, that, as the earth by the 'atmosphere there is no part but thus is made fruitful. Yes, pure religion sanctifies every act and word. If you will, you may breathe in this holy power with the atmosphere—at every breath, if you will—and the whole earth of green and gold may be to you an altar. For surely the atmosphere is the atmosphere of the maker of it, who lives in all its motions, and the green and gold of the earth is but the blooming where the foot of God is set. The wide heavens may be your holy place; for there, not therein, but there, all over, is the throne of him. The sun may be your evangelist, new every morning, re-writing the Scriptures from the beginning and making a new Genesis each day. The stars of night may be the shining paths of ministering spirits, coming down to take your soul and on their shining tracks carry it up thither where they are. Wherever there is truthfulness, vitality, goodness and love in the heart and life, there is the kingdom of God. Whether a man be a churchman, or to no church going, a Christian, a Mohammedan, a Pagan, it is the same. "The majesty of God, the safety of God, the immortality of God, enter into any man with justice;" and if the church know not and behold not this kingdom, wherever it be, then the church has not entered into its own. Religion, which thus runs freely down where the soul is athirst, which is the song of earth, sea and sky, and makes its home everywhere in the pure in heart, this needs give no other account of itself, nor answer any question; for that thus it is and does is simply to maintain itself from God.

Religion is pure and undefiled by nature, filling all those



faculties which lift us up above speechless creatures, nay, lift them too, I fain would think, yea, do believe; for I know not but somewhat of the ought trembles in the shame or love of an intelligent speechless creature among our dumb brethren. Religion brings us all to thoughts surely the grandest, the most momentous, the most personal, as well as most sublime, which can try mind, or search heart; thoughts too which no one shall ever run away from and go far but there he shall find they have come up to him, and once voiced are never silent, but will come speaking to us, in many forms, and in great experiences in life, to threaten, humble, encourage, command, inspire. Thus religion lifts us up to the heights which otherwise we could not conceive. We know them only as somehow we find ourselves suddenly standing there, and all the majesty of the earth, the heavens above, and the sea under, lying before us. I feel sure we are in the hands of Holy Spirit, whose life lights the universe. Is there one of you who feels not sure of that? Then saith the poet and the Psalmist, and the Christ, "that he pities us like as a father pitieth his children," and "covers us with the shadow of his wings." The raindrops fall musically, and the showers of the summer night array the shining tresses of the earth that the dawn may find this good globe clothed and beautiful; and the winged drops meantime, lest they be cruel in doing this great good, are turned aslant by the Father's hand, and the tender bird, which I wonder at day after day in our cold winters, when forth he comes into the late-rising light, "whose own warm wing his pillow was," slept dry and unchilled in rain and ice, and drinks the diamond drop from leaf and spray in the morning on awakening with the sun to his sunny song. The Father of us all "hears the ravens when they cry," "He gives the young ravens their food," and "providently caters for the sparrow." His is the golden harvest, his the sun that warms the ground. He hath planted life in the human heart, he giveth children to our tenderness, and crowneth the aged head with honor!

There have been creeds which were cruel creeds. But when I look forth on all these wonders, this beauty, I know, nor do I speak to anyone that knows not, that the cruelty, injustice, and pain from which my soul revolts never can be the will of

him of whose infinite love and tender mercy my soul is but a faint reflection.

Thus I answer the question, Why any religion?—that to speak the word is to answer it; that in truth I *know no question*, when forth I look on heaven and forth go on the earth, but only that the ear, quickening on the heights of love, faith, duty, as the ear doth when lifted whither sounds are ascending, hears

“at times a sentinel,  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space  
In the deep night that all is well.”

All is well! What can I beg? What question ask? The facts within me, which are Prayer, Praise, Love, Joy, Faith, are like the depth of the sea, the light of the heavens! Nor more to be questioned by me than the sea, nor more to be hung with darkness by me than the heavens! These facts within me are facts as great as any of the earth, and the laws of them as mighty as any laws of earth's objects or creatures. What can I beg? What question ask?

“Wish is worsted, hope o'ersped,  
And aye to thanks returns my thought.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Still pours the flood of golden good,  
And more than heartfull fills me.”

## THE ONE RELIGION.

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“Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?”

1. Corinthians, vi, 2.

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Like many a text for a sermon, this is no more than a motto, for I use it not in Paul's meaning. The apostle's intention in the words is very plain. He is reproofing Christians for going to law with one another before heathen judges. He says they should settle their disputes by referees among themselves. Indeed, he says, better suffer wrong than bring any quarrels before the “unrighteous,” or “unbelievers”—for by both these words Paul names the common law courts of the Roman world. The Christians he calls “saints,” and this is a very common use of the term throughout the New Testament. The Greek word translated saints means holy, and is the same word used in the phrase “The Holy Spirit.” But, as I say, it has in a multitude of passages the simple sense of converts to Christianity and members of the Christian community. Paul's argument is that, as the saints are to judge the world when Christ reappears in his power and glory, it is a shame if they be not able to judge the small matters of differences among themselves in the present.

But I take the text as a general assertion of pure idealism. It is true, indeed, that the saints shall judge the world; the holy, the high, the generous, the purely honest, and those that aim at unblemished rightness and truthfulness, shall judge the world. For the ideal never will stoop, and as things cannot stand still, but must move, and either the ideal come down or man go up, it is certain that men must move, and the ideal will stay and live in heaven to be worshiped.

But now, why shall the saints judge the world? or rather,

how is it that the good and the true, and they who will not break down the ideal, shall lead and judge? This is a great thought. I know of none more religious or touching more deeply the nature of man and the being of God. The reason the saints shall judge the world is, that saints are seers; that those who really do wish to know and then to follow the one right, beautiful, adorable way, will see it and fail not of it. If any fail, it is because they have a mixture of motives. They are willing to conform, to cut down or pare away the ideal, and take means that are only half fair and good. But no one will fail to see the best way in good time, whose whole heart is for that way when he shall find it. Jesus said this in one of the most profound sayings he ever uttered, according to the fourth Evangelist: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine or teaching." This is why the saints shall judge the world, because being pure in purpose and method, or willing to do God's will, they are seers, to see the way and know the doctrine, as Jesus said.

Now, seers must see the same things; for they can see only what is to be seen, and see it as it is. God is one and inhabiteth eternity, as saith the prophet, or, in another place, "from everlasting to everlasting he is God,"—which means that the holy and right and victorious way is the same for all eternity. An apostle has said it in another way—"With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Therefore, the seers who see His way, must see all alike; and whether they be parted by thousands of leagues, or by thousands of years, still they see and speak all alike, for the things they see are eternal with "no variableness, neither shadow of turning." But these things they would not *see* if they wished not to *follow* the eternal. If they were thinking how to mate and match little matters in time, and how to swerve a little from the true way to pick up this advantage, or how, again, to veer a little on another side to catch this gain or that ease, then they would see not the one eternal way, the right, the ideal, the true, which has the power of God to judge the world. But, as they look not at the lower things, but only with a holy and true devotion, at the simple right as it is, they see, and they see alike, and always have said the same things.

I have found great delight, mental and moral glow, spiritual inspiration, in reading the Scriptures of other religions besides the Hebrew and the Christian. And 'tis no wonder; for why should I not be lifted on wings that have proved strong to bear whole nations heavenward? Not alone the Hebrew and Christian histories, preachings, psalms, laws, precepts, exhortations, warnings, have been strength, comfort, and instruction in temple, hall and home, but the Scriptures of all other religions too. All have been mighty to command, to inspire, to uphold holy lives, support self-sacrifice unto death, and sustain humble, life-long faithfulness. Wherefore, I say, 'tis no wonder that holy pages of Scripture which have beamed so much for other men, however of a different climate, countenance and race, should shine also with a white and holy light to me.

Now, in reading these other Scriptures, I have observed four stages in myself. At first I found little in them—only here and there a bit that truly appealed to my mind and stirred me. On the whole I looked on them slightly. I gleaned from them no more than certain precepts. These Scriptures of the nations were alien to me, foreign to my habits of mind and feeling, not fitted to my mental experience or my religious expressions. Hence, as I say, I slighted them, and from my shallow dips into them was wont to return to our own Bible with a new emphasis, an enlarged conception of the vast advantage and superior grandeur of our Scriptures.

My second stage came slowly. It resulted from frequent returns to the other Scriptures, till by many resorts to them and by some happy circumstances I was led to read them deeply and long, and linger over them. Then they became to me far more than an assemblage of precepts, or fields where I might glean here and there some fine bits of moral wisdom. Slowly I entered into the *spirit* of them. I began to go to them as to something living and moving with human life lifting itself to the Divine Life. Then I was impressed, filled and moved; then I admired and revered; because I had come to the *spirit* of them sympathetically in some measure, as those peoples do in large measure whom the Scriptures feed and inspire in the native abodes of them.

My third stage was a return to our own Bible after this



sympathetic and deeper reading of other Scriptures. My former judgment seemed to me to be maintained and assured. The Hebrew Scriptures still seemed exceedingly grander, vaster, richer, deeper than all others. But now I had the advantage—a great one—of better equipment for judging, and I found my love of our own Scriptures quickened and dignified by my sympathy, if I may say so, with SCRIPTURE itself, which I had found living in *all* Scriptures.

This led to the fourth stage, which is a heightened and joyful sense of the greater glory and grandeur of the Hebrew Bible, not merely in comparison with others, nay, nor mainly so, but chiefly by its part in the glory of the whole, because it stands not alone on a plain, but towers above comrade peaks, all of which pierce the heavens. Then the full splendor and the grand height of the Hebrew Scriptures begin to appear, when they show in this fellowship with all Bibles, the most sublime stanzas of one sublime psalm heard everywhere on the earth, which is Religion itself.

This morning I will bring before you some sayings of the holy saints and seers of the world, spoken in differing Scriptures, that you may see once more that they have said the same things, and that all lovers of the truth are one, and that all children of men are one in God.

Take first, some sayings regarding watchfulness, that we must watch ourselves if we will grow in any grace. Now, when we think of this, what shall we look for in the sayings of the saints and seers? First we shall expect the thought that we must *watch ourselves toward God*, which is to say, toward the ideal and the perfect. We have to watch that the aim be worthy of eternal counsels, and then the means worthy of the aim. Every one will say that to set up a wrong end or aim is to make war on God. But many say that, while the aim must be pure and perfect, yet we must consider that we have but poor creatures to work with, who are warped and turned awry, and full of misguidance, passion, pride, and a thousand hindrances. Wherefore, say they, we must come down a little in our means and please the prides and the selfishness, that we may cajole them to good ends. But, to follow low motives and ways to please men, what is this but to be braver toward God than toward men,

thinking that we may outface the perfect and the eternal to gain credit with the transitory and the vain? Again, we shall expect the saints and the seers to say that we must *watch ourselves toward other men*; first, that we judge rightly, as we cannot do if we judge proudly or fiercely, or selfishly; which Jesus said thus—that if, having a beam in our eye, we try to take out the mote from another's, we cannot do it, nor even see the mote as it is. And, secondly, we must watch ourselves in order that we may be able to help any one; for, if we cannot look after ourselves aright, how can we help others? and if we keep not ourselves in the way, how can we guide others in it?

Here, now, I will read you some sayings from the saints and seers that you may see that truly they do say these things, which we should look for them to say:—

From Buddhist wisdom we have, “The sins of others are seen easily; but if a man look for these and find fault, his own weaknesses will grow.”

Confucius says, “If a man cannot improve himself, how can he improve others. When we see noble men, we should think of equaling them. When we see evil characters, we should turn our look inward and examine ourselves. Only he who has the most complete sincerity under heaven can transform and inspire others.”

Socrates says, “The only short, safe, and good way is to strive to be really good in the things in which we wish to be thought good. Whatever are called virtues among men may be gained by study and exercise.”

Says Confucius again, “To see what is right, and not to do it, is the part of a cowardly mind.”

From the Zoroastrian Scriptures, “Give me, O God, these two desires—to see, and to question myself. Watch thyself with all diligence; master thyself; so mayest thou teach others and subdue them, for thyself is hardest to subdue.”

In like manner Jesus, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”

Take, next, the duty and interest which we name Character, simple goodness, honesty, purity, devotion, unselfishness. What shall we expect the holy seers to say about these? We shall expect them to say the ideal things which are true forever and

ever, from everlasting to everlasting. Therefore, they will say, first, that the goodness and pure virtue which looketh to God for Himself and not for reward or praise or advantage, is the chief of all things to be thought of by men. The seers will say that there is nothing in religion or life like to the preciousness of pure character. Then, secondly, they will say that this always may be had; that outward things not always may be had, for some persons may gain more of them and some less; and often losses happen; but ingenuous goodness *may be had*, for it is in our power to be simply true, and strength is never far distant, but close at hand. Thirdly, we shall expect the seers to say that this pure character grows in us by many small fidelities, by which we become strong for constancy of goodness and for great requirements or exigencies. It has been said truly that by reiterated small choices betwixt good and evil we make our moral state, which thus is a growth very slow, and yet swift too, and momentous past all words. Finally, we shall expect the seers to say that when thus by faithfulness we have attained unto purity of heart and constancy of character, the eyes will be opened to all divinity, beauty, glory, to infinity. Here, now, I will give you some sayings from holy seers, that we may behold whether they do say these things:—

From Buddhist wisdom we have, “If a man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greater conqueror, and the greatest of all. Think not lightly of evil. Drop by drop the jar is filled. Think not lightly of good. The wise are filled with purity, gathering it drop by drop.”

Zoroaster says, “Adore God by means of sincere actions.”

The Laws of Moses say, “Thou shalt not kill, nor bear false witness, nor covet, nor steal, nor profane the name of God. Thou shalt not oppress another, but love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man; and fear thy God.”

Jesus, to the same purpose, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Next I will take the thought and grace of love. In this

matter what shall we expect of the seers? First, we shall look for the holy diviners to say that love is the greatest of all powers; that its strength is like almightiness; that it is so strong that even if for a time, nay forever (if we can imagine such a thing), it be without effect on another's heart, still *we* shall be weak in the work and effort if it be not in our own. Secondly, we shall look for the seers to say that love never must be overthrown in us so as to return hatred for hatred; nay, but love for hatred, and peace for anger, and every good for any evil. Again, we shall expect the seers to say that a pure and good love in us, and a greatness and devotion of love, and a great scope and breadth of it, relate us closely to God, for he is infinite love. With this now I will read you some saying of the seers, that we may hear if they say these things about love:—

The Zoroastrian Scriptures say, “Let us be such as help the life of the future.”

Confucius says, “Love to speak of the good in others. Treat not others as you would not wish them to treat you. Make happy those who are near, and those who are far will come.”

Buddhist wisdom teaches, “If there be any who hate, dwell among them free from hatred. Overcome anger with love, evil with good, the selfish with generosity, the false with truth; for wrath is not stilled by wrath at any time. Anger ceases by love—this is an everlasting law. If one have boundless and impartial good will, where he is the saying is come to pass, This is the abode of holiness.”

Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.”

Take next the virtues of simplicity and humility. What shall we look for the holy teachers to say of these things? First, surely they will say that we must ask much of ourselves rather than of others; that if rightly we be simple and lowly in mind, we shall not be asking or demanding always something of others—nay, but rather take with great gratitude what is given, as being more than perchance we deserve, and yet less than we exact of ourselves to give. Nay, but why should I say *exact*, for if we be simple and lowly minded, we shall be outpouring by



nature, and never think of it, except that it is joy. And, secondly, the seers will say that simplicity and humility are especially the graces of unconscious childhood, are like to the beauty and gentleness and softness of a simple child; and that when this continues into mid-life, and goes on upward till it sits like a crown on the head of age, which is to say, when the simplicity of the child is joined with the knowledge of the man, then comes to pass the greatest beauty. Again, the seers will say that there is vast strength and power in humbleness and simpleness of spirit; that these graces have a strength like to love, and perhaps a very part thereof, for what great love ever was there which was not simple and humble? Wherefore, it is the meek, the patient and the simple that prevail at last. Listen now to a few words from some of the holy teachers on these points:—

Confucius says, “He who requires much from himself and little from others, will save himself from anger. What the noble man seeks is in himself; what the ignoble seeks is in others.”

And Mencius says, “The noble man is he who loses not his child-heart.”

Socrates teaches, “To want as little as possible is to make the nearest approach to God.”

In like manner Jesus, “He who receiveth not the kingdom of heaven like a little child shall in no wise enter therein. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the lowly in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

I will take now the principle and fact of retribution. Of this surely the seers will say that it is certain. They will say that any foe of a good thing who has fallen on it to beat it down,

“Self assured that he prevails,  
Sees aloft the red right Arm  
Straight redress, the eternal scales.”

They will say that our sin shall find us out—nay, that already it has found us out, and never had to look for us, but always was with us; nor hides from us, nor ever lets us hide from ourselves. Again, they will say that the law of retribution is fixed in all things, in the earth, in the waters, in the air, in our bodies, and that all things muster and enlist to punish the evil deed, and that it never escapes, nor can cover itself in any way, because it



drags its own punishment on it by the law and nature of all things. Also the seers will say that though all the elements gather to punish, with pains, weakness, disease, loss, death, whatever eternal councils have judged wicked or wrong, yet the worst penalty is the evil deed itself; for it is worse to be bad than to suffer for being bad, and the greatest punishment is to be what must be punished; and this truth, however it delay, at last will burn its way to us, and on us, till we cry to heaven out of fires of shame. Now I will read you some of the seers' sayings of retribution, from Buddhist Scriptures: "There is a treasure that anyone may possess, laid up in the heart, charity, pity, temperance, a treasure that none can take away; but our sin will come back upon us like fine dust thrown against the wind. Not in the sky nor in the midst of the sea, nor in the clefts of the mountains is any place known where a man may escape from his evil deeds. For the evil doer burns by his own deeds, yea, as if burned by fire. But there is no evil for one who does no evil. Not even divine power could change into defeat a man's victory over himself. As a rock is not shaken by the wind, so the good swerve not in good report or evil report."

Once more, take the subjects that lie close to the heart of religion, at least if we may say that any one grand thought lies closer to religion than another. I mean the thoughts of God and Providence. What shall we expect the holy teachers and diviners to say on these thoughts? Many and great things indeed, neither the number nor the greatness of which I can bring before you now; and yet, I may say also, but few things, for all the thoughts that we can have of God and his ways with us gather together into but two or three very great and glorious thoughts, which hold all the others and gather them in, as the ocean all the rivers. First, we shall expect the seers to speak of the infinite and holy order, which is God's nature shown to us and living in all things. They will speak of the oneness which is in all things, from stars to water-drops, from a beast's pangs to a saint's sorrows, from an animal's love to a man's prayer. Through all, they will tell us, one thought, one life, one love, one law runs never wearied, never changing, never invaded, never broken, nor hindered, but always almighty, and always upbuilding righteousness. Again, the holy diviners will

say: What have we to fear with God? and they will answer: Nothing to fear. For first, we have not God to fear, since "all his power is to do good," and all his eternal glory to bless and preserve. And if we have not to fear God, but only to trust and believe, to wait, pray, give thanks, and never be afraid, then what else can be feared possibly? Surely it is plain that we have either to be afraid of God or of nothing, since everything is in his hands. And, again, we shall look to have the holy teachers tell us that God is not to be argued, or inferred or sought by proofs a long way off, but is to be seen and heard and known about us, and no one so much seen and known; nay, not even ourselves to ourselves, for we lie "dim and invisible in him," knowing him when we can not follow ourselves within his life. Yea, the seers will tell us that God appears to us, and that in all the glory of nature we do look on his face, and in all the sounds of the earth, and most in the human voice, and most in that when most it is filled with love and hope and thankfulness, we do hear with our very ears the voice, the speech of God. Now I will read you some of the sayings of these holy teachers of these thoughts:—

Socrates says, "Let any man be of good cheer about his soul who has ruled his body and delighted in knowledge in this life; who has adorned the soul in her own proper jewels, which are temperance, justice, courage, nobility, and truth. In these arrayed, the soul is ready for the journey even to another world, when the time comes. For if death be the journey to another place, and there all the dead are, what good can be greater than this? Be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth, that no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death. God orders and holds together the whole universe in which are all things beautiful and good. He keeps it always unimpaired, unconfused, undecaying, obeying his law swifter than thought, and in perfect order."

The Zoroastrian Scriptures say, "Him whom I exalt with my praise I now see with my eye, knowing him to be God, the reality of the good thought, the good word, the good deed."

In like manner Jesus, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing—and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. Fear ye not therefore. When ye have need, it

shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall say, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

"We can take the entire range of the religions of the world, and we shall find in all, something of the spiritual element present, something of the endeavor to reach the light, some attempt to articulate, or spell at least, a syllable of the name ineffable. All have aspiration, and all, viewed on the ethical or moral side, have some influence that freely accepted, would lift and improve, if not liberate and sanctify the worshiper. Homer says fittingly, 'all men yearn after the gods.' 'If we will but listen attentively,' says Max Muller, 'we can hear in all religions a groaning of the spirit, a struggle to conceive the inconceivable, to utter the unutterable, a longing after the infinite, a love of God.' St. Augustine declares that 'there is no religion which does not contain some grains of truth,' and Max Mueller again says, 'There is no religion, or if there is, I do not know it, which does not say, 'Do good, avoid evil.'"

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"Thanks be to God for his holy saints; thanks be to him who giveth wisdom, Which in all ages entering into holy souls maketh them friends of God and prophets."

O, blessed the fact that we have those who claim us for the ideal, who never will let us down, nor even grant that we shall fail, but hold up our spirits to go in a starry way, and to see light always in the skies whatever the night be. Oh, blessed! that we have the prophets and seers, the saints and diviners who never will permit to us a low aim but always insist on the highest, and then never will allow the highest to be sought in any but the highest way! Who never will bend to low motives, never will seek prides, or advantages, or prejudices, or parties, or hatreds, or anything paltry, but always only the truth of God

\*Charles D. B. Mills, in Unity, January 24, 1890, on "The Transient and Permanent in Religion."

by the way of the love and peace of God.

And, oh let us give thanks for these deviners or holy souls, *because they are everywhere!* How sad if we only had such teachers, but no others had! How mournful if only in our language their holy words breathed and burned, but in no other tongue! How sorrowful if all men who have not our teacher had no other of like kindling power and pure glory to their souls! O, blessings and thanks, praises and hymns, music and anthems, songs, rejoicings, gratulations and jubilees, that it is not so—that never any people is without witness of God; never any tongue without its Scriptures; never any world in all the universe of stars but has, we may be sure, its Christs and its holy pages of true religious inspiration; and all are one in the One! For this, songs, triumphs and rejoicings, music and anthems, thanks, blessings, hymns and praises!

## FAITHFULNESS.

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“Faithful unto death.”—REVELATIONS, II, 10.

I am to speak to you this morning of Faithfulness.

It is nearly fifty years ago that a young girl was living in the city of Boston. She was fortunate in her home and in her friends. She had been brought up in a circle of great cultivation and refinement, of very lovely social life, with troops of good people about her, many of whom were dear to her, and all helpful, instructive, refined, elevated. At the time that I speak of, this girl, finely educated, excellently trained in mind and in all the social virtues, was sought in marriage by a young man who was to come hither to what was then the wild West, to take for himself a farm, and live the life of a cultivator of the soil. This girl joined her lot with his, forsook all the charm of the life she was accustomed to, and came to a place not very far away from this city, a place where then the ground was just broken for cultivation, the neighbors few and far, and the society a pioneer company at the outposts of civilization.

I, at the time, was a very little child in the city of Brooklyn, New York State, just beginning the unfolding life of childhood, listening and growing, learning, imitating, using my opening powers in a home that was very sheltered, very quiet, and full of good social life.

Forty years passed away. Let us look at what these forty years had borne in fruit in the life of this young girl that I speak of. When she found herself in the Western country, the new country all unbroken and untamed, and the people about her for the most part as untamed as the soil, she thought very carefully and earnestly over the problem of life before her. She said to herself,—“Here am I, taken away from all those things that would have ministered to my mind, that were educating, training, strengthening me, making me full of resources, mental, spiritual and moral. I find myself suddenly put into this new



place, which bids fair to be full of daily toil for the common necessities of life. New ground is to be broken, much labor done in gleaning food even from this virgin soil, and all the great work of making a home to be undertaken, in a wild and untried place. Now, said the girl to herself, there is great danger of my being so absorbed in this labor as to be sunk in it out of sight of those spiritual realities which happily have been my lot heretofore; wherefore I must make it my rule, she said, and my great and strenuous effort all the time, to keep a firm hold of the idealities of life, of the spiritual values, things which have helped me not to acquire but to be; I must see to it that I continue to grow, as heretofore I have had the means of growing, in mind and soul. I must keep my hold on the ideal within me and without me.

With this reflection she began her life in the three great relations into which she had come. First among them was the relation of a wife. She must take her share in the joint labor and partnership of marriage. She began, therefore, early to make it a point in her life to keep the home full of cheer. She said to herself that with all the disadvantages of her position compared to that from which she had come, still in one way she had more advantages than her husband; for her work, if it were somewhat more monotonous, was at least more sheltered, and had within it more moments to be gleaned for little sprays of thought and swift upliftings of soul and mind. Wherefore it devolved chiefly on her, she said, as she thought it did on the women always, to beautify life. She thought this a power specially given to the womanly soul; it lay on her, she considered, to keep "sweetness and light," as Matthew Arnold has it, a lovely cheer, a beautiful feast not only for the eye so far as might be, but for the soul always, in her home. So her husband never came into the house but he found therein, however dark the day, the inward light of a smile, nor did he ever note that cheer was wanting. By many a little deft touch of the hand she made that beauty of the spirit come forth, and so far as the poor purse of the young couple served, she decorated her home with outward forms and signs of spiritual grace. Her external means for doing this work were three: First, she studiously cultivated flowers. Secondly, having been bred at her home very finely and skillfully in music, she never neglected the practice and

cultivation of that art. She had brought with her from her Eastern home her instrument, a good piano, the only one in that little settlement, and she resolved that one of her most serious duties should be to maintain her skill and her interest in musical exercise. The other outward means was reading. She had but few books; wherewith then she began to learn what Robertson says he found in himself, that to read deeply was better far than reading much. Quickened by her conscience, her love and her aspiration, she made these few books minister to her mind perpetually, and grew on that food by the depth of her penetration into the author's meaning and feeling, and by her own cheerful following forth of the lines of the thinker's thought.

By these means she decorated and cheered her home. And here was the secret of her success, that never in any day did she omit her care of these means. She early learned this great secret, which many learn only when the opportunities are gone and we have to look back on a failure which was so insidious as we went along that we knew not why we failed—this secret, that it was not enough to resolve that she would do this thing or that thing each day, however momentous it might seem to her when she made the resolve, but that time must be used *more definitely*, and that one means of success lay in resolving to do a certain thing at a certain hour each day, and to devote just so much time to it. By that means she was able to succeed. Thus, with all the labors and all the cares of a young farmer's wife, in which she was faithful to the end as well as she was in those other things, she never failed in any day to take her time to read for her soul's good and schooling, and her time to play and sing for the sake of grace and beauty, and her time to cultivate her flowers; all of which she made as essential as the preparation of the food that her husband brought from his cornfields.

Here I perceive a great lesson in this life, which I will stop a moment in the narrative to mention. The lesson is this,—Set your ideals high. For if you set your aim high, you will have always somewhat that is worthy of your faithfulness. To have that which by its very nature is a perpetual invitation, never stooping to you, but calling you, if you would enjoy it, up into the higher regions, is to be greatly stirred to faithfulness of conduct.

This same faithfulness will give us great power with others. With this thought I come to the second great relation in which she lived,—that of a mother. Children she had many, and as they came into her arms she brooded on her duties to them, as she had considered her duties as wife. Then she saw with rapture that one duty is the kindling of fire for another, and that by as much as she had carefully considered what she should do as a wife, already she had done much that was her duty as a mother. She saw she had but to gather the same cheer, the same arts and intellectual life about her little children as they grew, and convert all these things into words and instructions for them, to do a mother's duty. But one thing beside this she added, namely, hospitality. Then she began to open her house very warmly to her children's friends, whereby it came to pass that there was no place where they loved so much to be as in their home, where their friends were welcomed by the mother who was their pride as well as joy.

The third relation into which she had come was that of the citizen. She took up her citizen life in the same manner as the wife's and the mother's duties. And here indeed did her life shine very beautifully by its ideality. All that I have described she might have done for herself only, or for her children about her, for those ends of life and those opportunities which served her own interest and feelings. But if this only had been her aim she would not have succeeded so nobly or so completely. In one of the old ballads a departing knight says to the lady whom he leaves, that she must not grieve at his going forth on the errands of a true knight, for, says he,

"I could not love thee, dear, so well  
Loved I not honor more."

So if this young woman had not loved the ideal before herself and her own most precious possessions, she would have had two failures in her own struggles; first, she would not have been able so nobly to persevere, because if what she was thinking of was herself, and not that high ideal that stays aloft and calls to us as a star, then continually she would have been turned aside by other solicitations of self-love, so that she would have failed in that steady pursuit day by day which was her great power.

Secondly, she never would have had influence on others, because wide, inspiring, strengthening power is only to be gotten, as the old Chinese sage said, by perfect sincerity which has no shadow of self-seeking in it; but having that sincerity, she was inspiration and strength to all whom she met. Thus from this faithful home-life of hers, there began to spread out, especially as her children grew, a great wide good through all that community. This showed itself specially in her interest in her church in the village, into which she went and worked with so much heart and soul in spite of her labors as a farmer's wife, as to be a great support and cheer to it, and a veritable light and beam in it as she had been in her home. There, by her music, she gathered all the young people about her, as the community grew, and she instructed them in singing, and trained them, and they did wonderfully good work. She established a little center for books, she taught the need and love of reading, she organized little clubs among old and young, and met with them and led them, and she brought into the social life, even in games, dances and plays, a kind of good fellowship, good manners and elevation, which began to make that little settlement an abode of refinement and gentle life.

True is it that if you set your ideal high, you shall have great influence. Let your nobility of thought, your height of ideal, stand with you in place of power of position or wealth. Is Lord Bacon right when he says, "Good thoughts if they be accepted by God, yet towards man they are little better than good dreams if they be not put into acts, and they cannot be unless there be power and place?" No; for good thoughts *are* power and place. The great philosopher thought not of the might of humble faithfulness, nor saw how the circles of God widen out infinitely. Carlyle calls to us to follow the ideal as within ourselves and in our own very circumstances. Why seek for it without? "Here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere, is thy ideal; work it out therefrom, and, working, believe, live, be free." And so says Lowell: "The true ideal is not opposed to the real, nor is it any artificial heightening thereof, but lies in it; and blessed are the eyes that find it,"—to know that the true ideal is simply to work nobly, at whatever it

be, and that there is nothing so humble but, with the ideal thus worshiped and wrought forth, shall speak with trumpet tongue.

"No accent of the Holy Ghost  
The heedless world has ever lost."

During these forty years in which this lowly but prolific work was going on, I was growing as I could, twelve hundred miles from this woman. What a different lot was mine, by what a different path came I at last into her presence! I lived in a sheltered home, was sent to the best schools, educated tenderly and carefully, then at last going to college and there carefully considered and taught by friends and teachers for three charming and memorable years, and then entering the divinity school, and even more personally and individually made the care of my teachers, and the consideration and solicitous concern of the wise, the old, the good, until at last I came forth, and entered on my first cares and duties as a minister. For some years I worked, till it fell to my lot, with great benefit to myself (as now I can see, but not then), to turn aside awhile and plunge into business cares. For many years I was a business man, working as business men work, doing all manner of business, from the counting room to the duties of a salesman, and traveling far and wide over this country in my business. At last, by a strange meeting of events, just when I was ready to leave my business life, thinking I had obtained from it all that I could afford the time to obtain, a place opened for me in this great West, and now I have been here twelve years nearly, and after half that time I came hither to you in Chicago. During one of my missionary trips as minister of this church, I went to that community where this girl had come as a young wife, and her forty years of faithfulness had been harvested, I went to her home, I saw her, I beheld the fruits of her life. I saw her children with light in their faces, with cultivation in their manners, with intelligence and beaming ideas in their speech and in their eyes. I beheld them lovers of good things, intellectual, graceful, beautiful. I saw her work in the community. I beheld how all came to her as unto a Mother in Israel, then in old age, honored, solicited and loved. I saw that there was hardly any good work in that place that was not connected with her. All



works and labors bore her name. I saw that the church still rested largely on her heart and soul. I saw the fruit of her life in herself, still the light and fire of an eternal youth in her eye and in her manners; her face deeply wrinkled, and out of every one of those various and sanctified traces that life had made, out of them all, a light beaming, and the eye undimmed, the step still elastic, and a manner that bespoke a heart-interest in all the life about her. Still she was singing in the choir, still gathering the young about her and leading them in good things and especially in the music. I noted, and thought too, as I heard the people speak of her, and saw their manner when speaking to her, how all this influence had spread out widely. I saw that as it was in her circle, so truly each one that was in her circle had a circle, and each one in every circle again another circle of his own, and that from her thus was spreading out virtue, help, inspiration, enlightenment, no one could dream how far. And I reflected that there might be many cases unknown to me, and surely were, in which the results of this woman's steady faithfulness of life had borne other direct, distinct, visible fruits; for each man's faithfulness or unfaithfulness holds in its keeping the interests, even the lives of others. I saw recently a poor young woman, now in the prime of life but broken in back, deformed and bowed, her whole life ruined externally, whatever her inward fruit of grace, because a nurse had been unfaithful in her attendance, and let the little child fall on the floor. How many a bank officer, by his unfaithfulness, has brought to loss and despair many a poor hard-working man, who by years of steady industry and economy, had stored up a little deposit of savings, swept away by the officer's unfaithfulness and dishonesty. So in all positions of trust. One reason why I undertook this sermon was that I was moved to it by a word of one of you, who spoke to me of the terrible fact in a late railroad accident, that it had all come about by the absolute unfaithfulness of a railroad official, who employed a drunken engineer, knowing him to be such. Now, perhaps, if that officer of the railroad had been one of the sons of this woman, or of such a mother, or had come into one of the circles of influence of her humble and faithful life, that accident would not have occurred, the lives it cost would have been saved, the sorrows

spared. Besides, who can tell how sometimes such humble fidelity finds tongue? It happens that a poet, a prophet, a philosopher, a preacher, meets such a hidden angel of God, and he takes the lowly faithfulness as his scripture; he knows it is an elder scripture, before all the Bibles; and when he comes to his poem, his book, his sermon thereafter, he brings that fidelity, and *it* is his poem, his philosophy, his sermon. When I stood on that blooming soil, amid that majestic work, I resolved that some time I would tell you the story of this life; wherefore now it trembles in the articulations of my voice, and it is not I that speak to you, but that faithful life.

In this life I see clearly what faithfulness is. First, and above all, it is a thoughtful consideration of what duty is; it is care in thinking, that the duty be set so high that to climb to it is worthy of a human soul. Then, secondly, it is *doing* that duty which thus is set above. And thirdly, it is doing *all* of that duty; *all*; not a part, not what may please us; but as we do the duty without thinking of pleasure, so it is doing *all* the duty, that which is most pleasing and that, too, which is hardest, all the same, in pure faithfulness. Finally, faithfulness is doing all the duty *every time*, unceasing, day by day; as the water drips, so the drops of duty falling on the soil beneath, until it blooms indeed. As "by every drop of sweat that falls into the furrow, the farmer reaps a spear of golden grain, or plucks the benediction of a flower," so it is this dropping of duty daily that covers the soil with moral and spiritual bloom; but only if daily it come, if it never falter, if it be steady day by day, pure duty, heavenly faithfulness.

"Faithful unto death," is my text; only that is faithfulness. It is told of Jesus that he was faithful to the end. What can be said grander of any life than that it is faithful to the end? It is this that is the test. Ah, it is easy to do some one great achievement. There never lived a man who at some time could not tower up to some big thing; but they are few, perhaps, who day by day bear the strain of the lowly, unseen, unpraised duty, and every day do it. That is faithfulness; and truly it is divine. The Hindoos have a saying, that if you are building a mountain, with a basket to carry the earth onto the plain, and you have towered up that mountain, and lifted it until it needs but one

more basket of earth for the peak, and you carry not up that basket, you have not made your mountain; but if you have put but one basket of earth on the plain, and are bringing another, you are building a mountain. This is faithfulness, this steady, unwearied truthfulness of labor to the end.

I learn from this life, too, that faithfulness is the true greatness. I tell you I stand with such a reverence before such a lowly faithfulness as no other greatness of human attainment wrings from me. I can remember, and it is not many years back, when I stood with a kind of wonder, struck dumb, before the achievements of a magnificent Cæsar, a Lord Bacon, Shakespeare, Eschylus, Homer, I care not whom; I know *now*, with all propriety of reverence that I must feel for grand powers, and especially for grand powers grandly applied, as with Homer and Shakespeare, still that to stand agape at them, as if theirs was the human greatness most godlike, was after all a kind of savage wonder and barbarian admiration, while before me, right around me, in humble goodness day by day done, I was looking on the very face of divinity, or could have looked on it; and now I humbly trust I have learned to see the countenance of God more, and to know that it looks straight forth from this real greatness of day-by-day faithfulness in lowly places.

Here stand I with this peculiar elevation of the pulpit to speak to you, and you listen to me in a manner that to me never ceases to be infinitely touching and humbling. And you come to me, some of you sometimes, with great praise for my speech; and then I feel more humbled, sometimes even struck all but to the ground with a sense of iniquity, almost I might say, in being the momentary occasion of your passing over the real glories of life to praise only those which from a conspicuous position shine. What is my speech to-day, what were it if it had all the power of a Shakespeare's words, all the majesty of Homer, the grandeur and solemnity of Æschylus, the grace of Virgil, compared with the godlike beauty and grandeur of that lowly, unnamed, uncelebrated life, that hath in it the substance of these poor words? Truly, not to be named; truly, but the garments of a great, divinely made body.

Says Amiel in his Journal, "The errand woman has just brought me my letters. Poor little woman, what a life! She

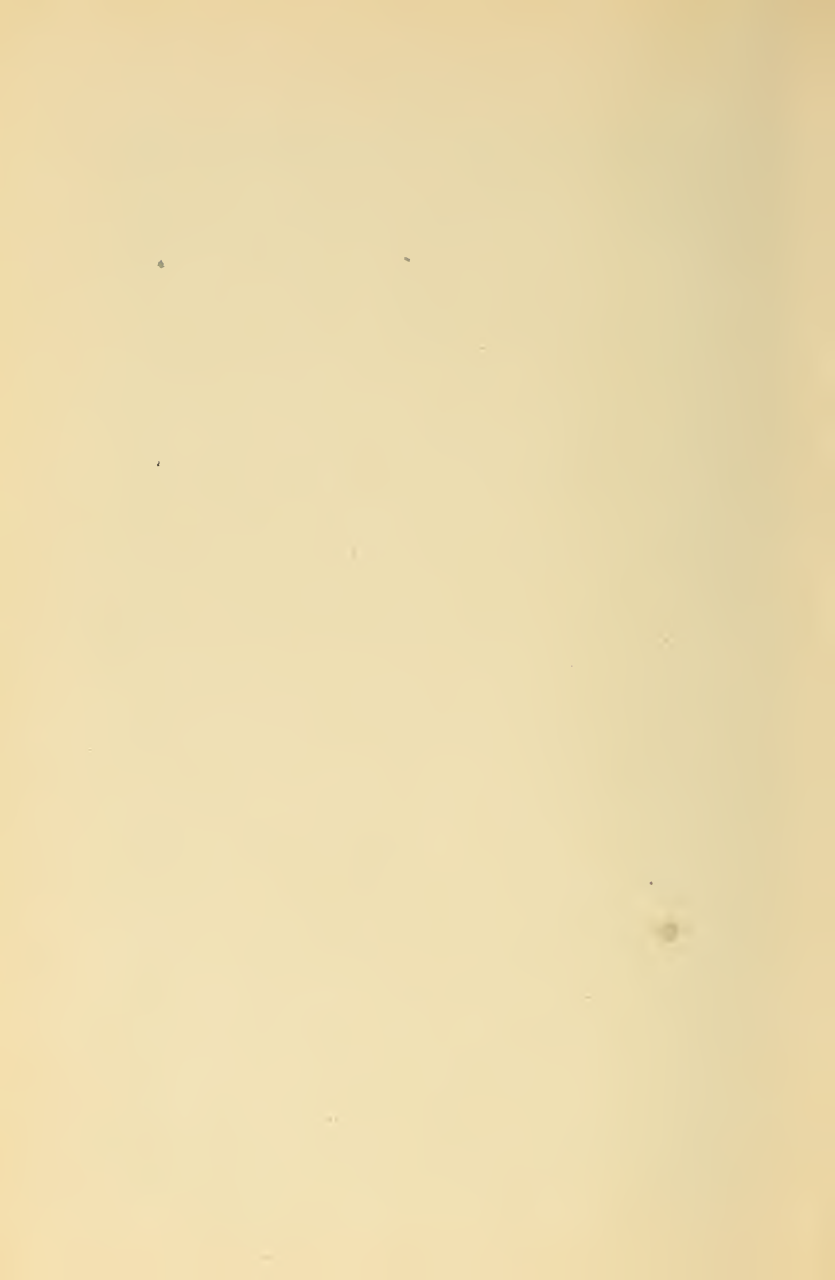
spends her nights in going backward and forward from her invalid husband to her sister, who is scarcely less helpless, and her days are passed in labor. Resigned and indefatigable, she goes on without complaining, till she drops. Lives such as hers prove something; that the true ignorance is moral ignorance, and that classification according to a greater or less degree of folly is inferior to that which proceeds according to a greater or less degree of virtue. The kingdom of God belongs not to the most enlightened, but to the best; and the best man is the most unselfish man. Humble, constant, voluntary, self-sacrifice,—this is what constitutes the true dignity of man. And, therefore, it is written, ‘The last shall be first.’ Society rests on conscience and not on science. Civilization is first and foremost a moral thing. Without honesty, without respect for law, without the worship of duty, without the love of one’s neighbors, in a word, without virtue, the whole is menaced and falls into decay; and neither letters nor art, neither luxury nor industry, nor rhetoric, nor the policeman, nor the custom-house officer, can maintain erect and whole an edifice of which the foundations are unsound. \* \* \* \* Duty is what upholds all. So that those who humbly and unobtrusively fulfill it, and set a good example thereby, are the salvation and the sustenance of this brilliant world, which knows naught of them.”

A late noble discourse says: “They have just erected a monument to Bruno, in Rome, on the site where amid the terrors of the *auto-da-fé*, his brave, serene soul stood unflinching witness to the eternal truth. \* \* \* I could not think of committing the sacrilege of tendering pity to such a one as Bruno. \* \* \* Nor is the late monument, erected amid the huzzas of an admiring world, any adequate compensation of what he suffered. Nor is it a compensation that Descartes and Kant and Hegel and Goethe have sat at his feet and called him master. He had other compensations, of a far higher order and of indestructible value. He needs no pity, for he conquered the world and appropriated all the good there is to be had in it as he went along. That fearless heroism in the search of truth was in itself the wealth of the Universe. \* \* \* It may not be [such] a loud voice that speaks to you in the name of the eternal I OUGHT. It will not be a voice summoning you to rally an army or

to take your life in your hand and stand against the shock of some impending crisis. It will, perhaps, be no more than a still, small voice laying upon you the duty of a manly honesty, of asserting the liberty of your own soul, of stepping quietly into a path of truth in which you will be neither persecuted nor followed. What it says to you, what poor, humble drudgery of self-denial it imposes upon you, is of little consequence, an atom in the world struggle, no more. What is of supreme concern to realize is this, that it is the same voice that Bruno heard, and that it has the same living relation to your moral history that it had to his, and means through your sweeter liberty and clearer truth, to affect the moral history of mankind. If a grander manhood and a grander life are to come to the world, your heroism in your little obscure world, means help to prepare the way.”\*

\* C. F. Bradley, in *Unity*, Feb. 15. 1890.





## “ O GOD ! ”

—The Psalms.

“ O God ! ” is the cry of humanity. It is the cry that has as many meanings as human needs are many, for there is no need but cries aloud “ O God ” at some time. For every real need within us (I speak not of *wishes*, which may be vain or foolish, or vagrant or impious, but of *needs*) may become a joy, having a great and blessed satisfaction pertaining to it, and then it cries or chants or sings to God like Nature’s sounds when the morning seems alive with thanksgiving and it is so beautiful to live. Or a need may be pain, a very anguish, a cry that is no voluntary offering, but unwilling; by terrible strain or holy passion, or wild passion, wrung from us; and then the cry is unto him, “ O God ! ” for help and healing and comprehension.

It is to God, the Giver, the Helper, the Healer, that we cry.

There are three places or junctures, halting places I may say, or crises in life, where we may come to such a pass as no language will utter nor any kin-sympathy measure. These are joy, sorrow, moral failure.

Of joy I know not what to say but that it is unspeakable above all things. Pleasures, delights, charms, may be told; but when the soul is full of *joy*, and running over, that is far different, and more. Joy has a very deep sense. It is far out of sight within. It may be scanned in some of its signs or outward features, but it has few of these beyond a simple lovely or gentle peace. Joy makes no gestures, laughs not, shouts not nor is noisy in any way, nor dances nor runs about, nor throws frisky antics. Pleasure does these things. But joy is still, deep, heavenly, full of light but not scattering sparks. How can it speak its silence, its fullness? I have tried to listen with my ear close to a soul of joy, but I could never hear that it could speak much. I think that joy is more tongue-tied than sor-

row. Yes, sorrow is more to be told than joy; it is easier to utter grief than to bring joy to the ear. I can think of naught so unutterable as great joy; yea, and I am sure in my soul that joys are greater than griefs. Blessed be the Father that it is so! There is no sorrow in all the world so great as joy may be great, yea, and *is* great in this blessed day-life of ours, if we will know it and have it so. And this, mayhap, is the reason why joy is more unspeakable than pain or sorrow, namely, that it is so much greater, so far more spacious, not so much to be compassed by words. This, to my eyes, is very blessed, that joy has such vantage and is of all things the least to be told or unrolled to another because it is so great, so vast, so like God, who sorrows not, but joys. When such a bliss is on us, when joy thus inhabits us, how can the heart cry out, how can it leap from its dumbness, how can it find any speech for the joy? The heavens are full of light, the earth of life; the horizon is a circle of love, increase, coming forth, return into the soul. Growth, radiance, devotion, all the riches of life like golden showers from the sky and vapors of pearl from the earth,—all these come entering in and bending over us. What speech is there, what language, yea, but one word, that shall unfold this joy? Then we cry unto the Source, the Giver, "O God!"

The exclaiming "O God!" in joys, is a very great deepening of the joy; but also it is very natural, and we are made to have very deep joys, and to sound the depths of the best and to bring them home to God. For how precious it is to be given what we have. And if we earn it, still to receive it from hands of love sweetens the gift, heightens the boon. To be swarmed on by pleasures as if by chance, as if they fell prone around us and were not given or brought to us, surely, this were to have little joy with them; but if we have them from a hand, how then they are handled by ourselves as things touched before and shaped from a hand, and from a hand put into our hand, and full of infinite worth and fellowship, of the meaning of love, of the presence of life. So it is when, having had joys, when *seeming* to *find* them by the way-side or to *labor* them into being, we know that we have not *found* them; no, nor *made* them, but that we have *received* them, when we have walked far enough or when we have worked well—not

to *get* the joy for ourselves, or we shall *not* get, but in sacrifice religiously, or for some other person's joy—*received* them, and we stand struck with light, and the floodgates of the heart open as in a morning, forth-pouring the cry "O God!" Then is joy great, heavenly, very full of purity and of ecstasy, and afterward of peace and of everlastingness, when we know it is given us by the Giver and is of him and in his being and his presence, and that it hath become ours, not ceasing to be his. What a cry of joy and in a joy is that "O God!"

But the need that cries may be a heart-wrining need, unsatisfied, tearing up the stones of the heart's cloisters, full of pain and terror and lone sorrows. Then riseth the same cry, "O God!" 'Tis the cry for the Helper. Oh what a human cry is that! How it issues and sounds and sounds back everywhere! The Helper! Who has not need of help? Who feels strong enough? Or who, if he feel sufficient, is not thereby the weakest of all? But there is strength, though we be not strong! There is glory and eternity, though we be weak and perishing—the Helper! And the cry is unto him, "O God!"

Sorrow may be spoken better and told more than joy, and brought forth by ease of words. And yet but little. Even the open sorrows, the griefs which we need not cover or must lay open, the disappointments and losses, privations, hopes deferred, despairing toils, loneliness, desertion, friends faithless, hard, cruel—all these which show themselves plainly and come into broad light, are not told easily, and but little can be spoken. More than great joys, and yet but little. And there are very great and noble, heavenly, sorrows which almost match joys for their dumbness. Yes, even the open sorrows, to be seen of all eyes, must be known by discernment most, by words least. But also there are secret sorrows, the worst and hardest, which we must not try to utter; nay, they become harder, and weigh heavily the more, if we so much as think to speak them. We are forbidden sympathy in them. We must keep them in our hearts alone. 'Tis for the good of the soul and of the world that we should hide them. And if forcibly and with a kind of impiety we speak these griefs, not only do they weigh the worse of themselves, but others will pack them hard on us; for 'tis little like that we shall find good and

safe ears for an impious confidence; no, but bad ears, half-friendly, faithless and cruel, or selfish, vain, jealous, wanton. Thus if against nature we bewail aloud the sorrows which nature bids us hug in secret, we are punished twice, for the woes are the heavier, and the persons on whom we cast ourselves will be like to throw us down and rend us. So that because the most open sorrows can be spoken but little at most, and the secret sorrows must not be told, grief can have but little voice, sorrows must be very silent, and approach to the unspeakableness of heavenly joy. When they come trooping on us, very many, or when one comes like a wave that seems the whole ocean bulging and over-running, when the eyes stream like blind fountains, seeing not the light into which their showers push, and the ears are rent like a drum overbeaten, light gone, noon darkened, sounds dead or concords untuned, griefs flying in the soundless darkness like bats, pains and frights and losses entangling with us, what can we cry? What speech or language? Only His name who saith "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people;" yea, and giveth the power of comfort. For never did one say "O God!" but he knew that he had told his secret to the ear of love, and his faith was made quick, and

"The very thinking of the thought,  
Without or praise or prayer,  
Gave light to know and life to do,  
And marvelous strength to bear."

It is great help to look above, to look upward, to turn us by vision, even by strain of vision, above ourselves and above the world, far over all. Only to look up higher—what help! Even if it be only a little higher! Still 'tis great help. To look at the next place above us, though but a step, a *little* climb, still is to look up; and this is help. And if we look to the next place above us, to the small height over our heads, soon we shall look above that even before we reach it, and soon look only above and above, making no comparisons, but only uplooking. And this uplook is an "O God!" At some great joy of inspiration, of sight, of hope, yes, or of rest after tossing and toil, the lips speak what the eye hath looked. We cry "O God!" to the Helper, being helped, because it is help to look above or up, and we cry out with the sense of help, strength, almightiness.



Now, if we be on some height and look up to another height, we see the sky beyond that height; or if it be shut away by some roof or overhanging thing in the height, when we have gone thither, if only we keep the up-look, there at last is the sky. So it is with the spiritual heavens. We look up into the Helper's presence and power; we turn us to the Infinite and look into infinite Presence. I know not but then all sense of looking *up* must be gone; it is fled; it has no meaning now. Surely it must be so if the eye that was looking is caught and carried and held so high, so purely in that sky which hath come overhead, that the earth hath gone as an earth, seen only as it may look from a star in the infinite heaven, as far away on one hand as any star is far away opposite, and all the lights of heaven equal, far and near and alike, and no below or above, but we looking at the Infinite by being embosomed in the Infinite. This is great help. By this we turn to the Helper. In all the transitory, the passing, the growing and decaying and dying, the striving and mounting and falling, the heights and counter-heights, "O God!" is the cry for the Infinite, the Immutable—"deep unto deep"—the cry unto God which signifieth God, the infinitely finite unto the ONE who is ALL and includeth the finite. Great help and power this is, in whatever need, and whether the crisis be lightened unto joys or be darkened into pains,—great help, to know and think and live in the Infinite, the Eternal, the Almighty, to be in this thought, to walk so in it that we shall cleave to it or know it in such way as Epictetus taught. "Think of God oftener than you breathe," said he; which is to say, "Think of him as much as you live;" which is another mode of Paul's saying that we live and move and have being in him. When was it not help and peace and power to come home? But to think of the Infinite and Eternal is to come home, where we live and have being.

We must go to the Helper again, by as much as we are weak. And how weak we are! What little strength is our best strength! What slender availing! What close and hard bonds! What limitations! How short a way we can go! How little do! I speak not now of moral weakness—of that hereafter. Nay, and I speak not of feebleness of will, which often is an element of un-morality; and strength of will is not a virtue always, but may

be mere stubbornness—an uncomely thing. But even stubbornness—how weak it is! How little it can do! What a short tether to it! Try as we will, and cling to the effort, yet our strength may be but as a babe's. We may wrestle like a giant with the winds and waves and with fire, but they whirl and toss and drown and burn us, and hustle us away or crumble or evaporate us. We can lift but little weights; yea, if 1000 pounds, what is it? We can not build mountains nor drain seas nor raise islands nor sink continents. We can pound and shape and build a little, plant, reap and store a little—that is all. And what can we do against the might of nature in her wraths, her awful poisons, her pestilences, her fevers and sores and wastings, when once let loose and fallen on us. A little seed, a pebble, an atom, a grain, a drop will kill us.

"Dost thou dream that thou art free,  
Making and forming all that thou dost see  
In the unfettered might of thy soul's liberty?  
Lo! one nerve tortures and maddens thee!  
One drop of blood is death to thee!"

Oh, yes! Let the will be mighty, and will as it will and never give up; but the arms are short and the hands small and the bones brittle and the back bending. We are very weak, and "when the elements are at their horse-play," we are a mere toss to them. 'Tis in such insufficiency that we cry to the Helper. Then we cry, "O God!" We are weak, but we know there *is* strength. We faint or fail or are torn or tortured or die—we can not stand. But there *is* strength. What help to think of that! What substance for us! What peace and power! 'Tis psalm and song then to cry it aloud—not a cry of despair that we are weak, but of glory and joy that while we strive we know *He* is strong—stronger than we, and then all-strong, almighty, fainting not nor tiring nor variable nor having a shadow of turning! O, it is from a deep calm of our own bonds, a peace and quiet of fragility, a willingness of rest and submission, an acceptance of insufficiency, a piety of abiding in what we can not do, a very camp and tabernacle of waiting, a sweet humility, yes, and a glorying in our sight that beholds power, that knows strength, that sees perfect sufficiency and views the stream of all things moving in obedience,

—'tis from all this that unto strength of strength and power of power and glory of glory we look up and say "O God!"

And yet can a mere nothing be made somewhat? Shall impotence be fed and nourished? No. "To him who hath shall be given." 'Tis only because we have somewhat that we shall have more; because we have vast store, might, riches, that we can think of Infinite Strength, of Perfectness. 'Tis true the human body is weak, unarmed, unclad, delicate in digestion; yet, too, what strength, endurance, store of postures and motions, what fine health possible, what beauty and glow of health, what old age! It is our duty to be strong, to nourish the body and venerate it. Also, what might of will is in us! And with this what apprehension, what power of mind! We are unarmed because we need no claws and fangs, having reason, mathematics, invention. A sense of power, of vast range, of illimitable visions, of grand things to be done and of strength in men to do them, of beauty yet undreamed, of human triumphs not conceived, yea, and of power in one's sole self till we be seized with an immense faith to dare, to put forth effort, to trust ourselves, verily to stamp on the earth like Galileo, rapt with sight, with discovery, with rythmical harmonies,—these feeling rush over us at moments,

"Through life and death, through fate, through time,  
Grand breaths of God that sweep sublime."

And they so lift up the head, and the sense of power so elevates the whole soul, that for joy, for wonder, for unbounded impulse, we cry aloud, "O God!"

In moral weakness, in sad failures, sins,—the worst sorrows—in rash passions, ungoverned desires when comes the shame of not being obeyed by ourselves, after pleasures that leave stings and reproaches, in furies and rages, in jealousies, envyings, hardness of heart, lies and frauds—oh what need, bitter need of the Helper! These evils come debating with us, calling with tones that a little distance makes seem sweet though afterward they are horrible in the ear. 'Tis but human to stagger sometimes in some of these dire tremblings. Even though we fall not, we shake. In the nip of temptation, in enticements, gildings, solicitings, ridicule,—then wavering, swaying, shaking, wrestling, we cry "O God!" Was ever that

cry raised without answer? Did ever any man go to his knees but he was stronger? We are safe while we pray, saying "O God!" No other words, no art, no confessions, entreaties, no history of our need, of past falls, of present threatenings,—not these. Only "O God!" 'Tis the cry of the soul! Oh how often raised out of these terrible depths! For the dark pits are not like to the soul, and looking up the spirit catches a gleam of the sky like to itself, and cries "O God!" And when repentance has done its work, and we have left the evils, still we cry; for we shall never get away from the shadows of those ill deeds. They stretch after us. "Our sins," it has been said, "like to our shadows when our day is in its glory, scarce appeared. Toward our evening how great and monstrous they are." Yea, they hasten down life's hill in front of us, when the Sun of youth is far and low behind—regrets, pangs of shame, repentances of cruelties and faithlessness when now it is too late to do the good that in its day we would not. What can we do? What shall we cry? Whither betake us? What help? What comfort? "O God!"

The cry of the soul is speech *to* God, but not speech *of* him; and this is to be noted with care, for the two are very different. To speak *to* him is easy, yes, and very natural. Did ever any man live who spoke not *to* God? The untutored, the simple, the primitive, the wild man speaks to him continually. And if a man be very learned and wise, perhaps he speaks to him the more, though very differently; yea, if a man be much instructed, have learned great things, be full of arts and sciences and riches, have his hands full of the earth's good things and live in places much adorned and covered with ease and beautiful things, and if he be full of power and quiet as the wild man is full of alarms and weakness, and if he be full of knowledge and discoveries and reasons as the wild man is full of fancies, stories and pictures, still he speaks to God. For what mean those sudden outcries, those appeals, those ejaculations, those forth-throwings of fear or hope or sorrow or astonishment, those mighty prayers pressed into one word, those speakings of *that one name* in an extremity when the man cries "God, O! God!"—what are these but the speaking to him in those crises, those extreme moments when a man most is himself because he forgets himself? Yes, 'tis easy to speak *to* him; nay, 'tis not to be avoided; none

can withstand. Some extremity will seize you and hurl you to that ground of speech, be you as strong or as weak, as wise or as simple, as learned or as ignorant, as wild or as tamed as you may. A man will be gripped in the talons of a pang or a need or a terror or a wonder and awe, and cry "O God!"—not thinking but speaking as he is and crying out what is in him! So easy is it to speak *to* God, and not to be escaped.

But to speak *of* him—who can do that? Speech is but thought moving from one thing to another and perceiving what one is like another and in what they are alike. And of these things speech can speak, and of their unity or likeness or sameness, and of the laws of them which their likenesses are. But speech cannot speak of God, for he is the One in all. All things come to one in him; and so there is no quality, no likeness and no difference which is not of him; and what speech can compass all qualities and kinds and materials and natures and infinity of beings and infinity of likenesses and unities and differences and divisions? Wherefore let speech go so far as it will, or so far as it can, how far can it? How far has it gone? No distance, nay, not a step, but only a stumble. If one were to speak forever, and every word were utter truth, in itself utter truth, yet alone each word would be naught, nay, with a multitude it would be naught, and without the infinity of them it would be naught as to God, being only just a particle or many particles, in itself, or with others, but naught as to God—just as one breath, or ten thousands, or myriads, are but breaths and not the atmosphere. Speak of God, if we dare try, as much as we will or can, and say all that we can come at to say, all we can sink into or soar up to, and still there is more to be said, and so much more that we are as if judging of a sea by its margin; and, however we sail off still we are but a little way out from the coast and the sea infinite beyond; and we have left him unsaid; we can not speak of him. If we try to tell of him, not only speech fails, but thought flies, mind leaves us; which is to say that we die, we become naught, for what are we but thought, and what is left if thought be fled? 'Tis so I would interpret the Scripture, "Thou canst not see God and live." When we try to behold, to scan, to tell, thought faints, and thought is life, the life of us, that flees from the seeing of God.



But by as much as we can not speak *of* God, we can speak *to* him. 'Tis the same with a man. You shall speak *to* me, O lover of me, and know! But you shall not speak *of* me and know! You cannot tell of me, you can not describe me, nor go round me, nor picture me, nor conceive me in any way or shape. How then canst thou tell of God unto me? Nay, thou mayest speak to thyself and hold communion, thought with thought, within thee, and all thoughts with thyself, past all knowledge and wonder and awe; but thou shalt not conceive thyself, nor tell of thyself, nor describe nor draw any line about thee. How then canst thou tell of God to thyself, how canst thou speak *of* him?

Yet thou wilt speak *to* him, and every one will speak *to* him; thou must; thou wilt cry out, in all the great things of thyself, in mighty feelings or extremities, wherein thou canst not speak of thyself nor of him, thou wilt cry out "O God!" and speak unto him!

Here is awe and ease together! Here is Nature and Infinity! Here is mystery; but mystery is knowledge. Yea, we live in mystery, in so great mystery as can not be told. Sir Thomas Browne liked to lose himself in an "*O altitudo!*" O height! O heavenly height! O soaring flight of soul where no wing can go, no, not the eagle wing of thought! O height above the sun and stars! Above all things but just the soul's own proper and joyful hardihood of wing! But this mystery, this height, is not uttered when we say that we know not what is in the height, or what the height is, or that we can not know, or that there is somewhat which is not to be known, the unknowable. For ignorance is not mystery. Mystery so *lives* that it is before us like a spiritual being; but ignorance is simply naught—nothingness. If we be all ignorant of anything, then we know it not, even so much as to know our knowing it not. It has not part with us; it exists not to us. But mystery is a knowledge. 'Tis the margin of our being, where we are of God; nay, it is the thought that we have no circumscription or are on one side of which is God and on the other ourselves. Mystery is the knowledge that this can not be so, but that we live and move and have our being in him. Is this mystery? Yes; but it is knowledge. For how could we live and move and have our being out of him? This is truth, that we know we are in him;

mystery is this unspeakable knowledge. But if we lived and had being out of him, then we should know it not, that we were out of him, for then we should know naught of him, nor have the thought of him. This were ignorance, like as we may suppose the animals are in, at least the lower animals and the plants. But mystery is the great knowledge, the unspeakable knowledge, that we abide in him, that all creatures live by one life, and abide in that life, and the life in them. Wherefore, though I know not how to speak of this mystery, 'tis not because of ignorance but because of unspeakable knowledge; yea, and past all measuring or fencing by thought as well as by speech, and beyond all imagination; and not proper to imagination, which deals with shapes, pictures, numbers of things. But language is but one way of laying hold of aught, as the hands, the eyes, the ears, and other senses, are other implements for laying hold; and thought again is but a means or tendril or stretched-out antenna for laying hold. But if hands and eyes and other powers can not lay hold of *all* things, 'tis no wonder, but only natural and similar, that language can not grip all things, or the All, with its ten thousand tenacles of words, however they stretch forth, nor that thought cannot enwrap and lay hold of the All, howsoever it spreads like a fine vapor to engulf the sky; nor that imagination goes not far nor lays hold, which can but hew lines in things, and make joints and match them together. But though the mystery be past wording or syllogizing or picturing, 'tis knowledge within us and not ignorance; and we live by the rapture and the depth—past all sounding by any lines—and the joy and power of that knowledge. Oh how warm and living is that knowledge,—nay, not so much living as life! How dear and cleaving unto us, and we to it, is that mystery! What love and joy! What peace and quiet! What strength, glory, light!

We come forth, we issue upon this earth, we are gathered from all the atoms. Who knoweth how? By what concourse are the atoms assembled to form us? How are they guided to our shape? What is the quickening of us? By what way doth one element lay hold of another and how cometh their need of one another, and how acts one so as to bid the other arise and set out growing forthwith and the other so as to be bidden and

to obey and to begin to grow and call the atoms to itself and lay them in the shape of the image which is to be made? How are these things? Nay, this is darkness; we cannot answer; it is our ignorance; we know not how. But the *mystery* is that we come forth. This is knowledge. What great joyful knowledge, that now no one sees us and again a little while and we have come forth and are here, and are seen, and soon have the knowledge that we have come hither, and dwell in this mystery. When we question of the way and manner, and *how* this part to that was matched and made, and arose, then we are looking at one part and at another, and our ignorance is very blinding. But when we look not at the parts, where our ignorance lies, but at the whole, at the one knowledge and mystery that hither we come and here we are, then we know ourselves, then we are with the mystery, then we cry "O God!" and are very blest and joyful.

Thus the mystery goes with us, the knowledge that we are here; and the mystery grows as we know daily our joy, strength, actions, loving, delighting, working, praying,—all of them knowledges, mysteries. Can aught be greater mystery than every moment of our strength? Yea, what knowledge! What bliss of strength! What knowledge of it! What joy of mystery! What holy presence! What assurance of fact of life—that we grow strong, that we have power, majesty, might. When these mysteries arise—nay, all together only one mystery—and the soul swells, the heart beats with life, again knowledge grows and mystery is full. We cry "O God!" and are filled with joy.

Then at last we go away. Who can tell how? Why move the atoms away from us that before trooped to wait on us? Why seize us and gnaw us and tear the body to pieces the atoms that before were held at bay? Why acts not the will on its quick nerves? Why has sense shut her five windows? Nay, but this is our ignorance? Shall we answer sometime? Shall we tell *how* these things are, and *why* they do so and not otherwise? Who can say? But our knowledge and the mystery is that we go; that having come, we stay not, but go. When we behold this, and are full of this knowledge, and see that it is the same knowledge with that of our coming hither, and that it is

by the same power and law and love that we come and go, we look on it till it shines unto us, and we cry again, "O God!"

So looks the eye of the soul! So speaks and cries its tongue, speaking not much *of* God, lest it be struck dumb, but evermore *to* him by the faith of need.

I like those words of St. Bernard,—  
 "Why do my eyes behold the heavens,  
 And not my feet?  
 Because my eyes more than my feet  
 Are like the heavens."

'Tis like to like and same to same,  
 'Tis light to light, love unto love,  
 Ever doth sweep,—  
 Praying and hearing, deep unto deep,  
 From below, from above.

Is it the eye doth rise to the heavens  
 Because 'tis like the stars in the sky  
 From end to end?  
 Yea, but as much the heavens descend  
 To meet the eye.

I know not, Father, what is low -  
 Or high, first, last, above, below;  
 Only that me  
 Thou namest with my name for thee—  
 'Tis all I know.





## A "CURE-ALL."

I have called this sermon a "cure-all," which medically is a suspicious name. A remedy may be distrusted which promises to cure everything, for usually, then, it is specially adapted to nothing. It is the mountebank in medicine who claims to have some one potion which will drive away all "the ills that flesh is heir to," or cure some sickness under all conditions. If it be a true conclusion, and plain, "The better health, the less physic," I am sure that very often it is true conversely, "The less physic, the better health." As all things of human interest properly treated may find a place in the pulpit, perhaps it would be not amiss to make a discourse some time on the impropriety, not to say immorality, of using nostrums and quack medicines. But all use of drugs should be with reserve and tender conscience. Dryden has mention of a man who, being in good health, lodged himself in a physician's house, and there was persuaded by his landlord to take physic, of which he died. It is certainly true, as Addison says, that "all these inward applications which are so much in practice among us, are for the most part nothing else but expedients to make luxury consistent with health." I lived myself once for a long time in the house of a person whose whole existence was a process of eating himself sick, and dosing himself well.

Nevertheless, it is the purpose of this discourse to set forth a cure-all for the little moral plagues that infest society. I have a recipe which it is my purpose to give you, by which truly all the fogs or swarms of little evils that make life sometimes such a wearisome way, may be abated wonderfully, and all the moral portion of these ills be destroyed altogether. Note carefully that I speak of the small evils, which take continually their noxious flight from man to man and from group to group,

like little buzzing insect pests in a summer night. There are many great evils, including the bold crimes against social order, crimes of violence against life or property, which follow vast general ills and increase or decrease in the wake of war or famine, or riots, or industrial disorders of any sort. Also, there are great and persistent evils of the gross or violent kind, which spring from the tainted blood of a bad or criminal parentage, or from that vast hereditary impulse in which the whole of society shares and struggles, the survival, namely, of a certain underlying savageness, not yet extinct, derived from our remote barbarous ancestry. It will be a long time before we escape from the past, even as now it is; and unto the future this present moment is becoming the past. It behooves us to consider, therefore, as daily we go on, what ethical type and moral transmission we are storing for the future. Many violent evils are reversions to the savage type for a time, under the stimulus of circumstances which are like the ancient savage conditions. Of course the class infected with such ills as these may not be able to apply the recipe which I shall give you. It is beyond the power of the moral stage in which they are. They are too sick. I claim not for my recipe that it will cure absolutely everything,—especially, instances of violent disease. Such ills and the people in whom they survive must struggle along, and others must struggle with them, waiting for the slow process of development or civilization, which by long and delicate correctives, albeit with many pauses, many mutations and much surgical infliction, at last brings to pass redemption and health, refinement and moral life.

Nevertheless, my recipe is not worthless on this account. It is well to have a cure for light diseases. There are hosts of little ills and small wrongs which plague society, and infect it with painful distempers, because though so small they are so many, and even so base,—poisonous vapors from bogs of envy, hatred, selfishness, revengefulness, pride, presumptuousness, conceit, insolence. These base little vices vary here and there, in this or that town or village, hamlet, church or house, with the influence of good or bad individuals. Sometimes even one man of high virtue, not austere, but genial, and yet surrounded with a high and rare atmosphere, both of freedom and of purity, which

floats no coarse things, will charm away these petty but prolific ills from a whole community. The belief in this power was one of the great charms and means of influence of the Chinese sage, Confucius. Once when wearied with his disappointments, his exclusion and lack of success, he thought he would go away and hide himself in the company of the wild tribes of the East. One of his disciples said to him, "But how can you do that? They are rude people." The Master answered, "If a superior man dwelt among them, what rudeness would there be?" A friend told me once of a little New England village where the visitor would notice instantly an uncommon appearance of tidy comfort, peace and thrift, unlike the adjacent towns. The door yards were comely with grass and flowers, all the porticoes well swept, all the barnyards trim and cleanly, all the fruit-bearing trees well pruned, all the fences mended and walls whitened, all the houses neatly painted and "roses dotting the door lattices," all the streets well made, and bountiful shade trees growing along the highway. An air of industry, gentleness and self-respect pervaded the whole place. And this marked character, my friend assured me, was all due to one man, a humble minister in the little hamlet, who had stayed calmly with the villagers for many years until his head had grown silvery in their service. He had won the confiding love of every soul dwelling there, till gradually, by wise advice, patient exhortation, sympathetic encouragement, good example, and by that kind of effluence from himself which Confucius dwelt on, he had brought the whole village into the image of his own clean life. And if so the houses, barns and fences marched like a little army white uniformed for a holiday at his command, surely they who dwelt therein must have felt and followed that same gentle influence in their hearts, to the outcome of a peace, sincerity, kindness and justice whiter than all the fences, more fruitful than all the vines.

Well, I say I have a recipe for wholly extinguishing all those petty ills, those little moral evils and common wrongs of life, which depend largely on individual influence in small communities, or even in the many social circles of large places, and in the wider relations of business, manufacture, trade, finances; such evils as slander, scandal, gossip, all forms of over-reaching, injustice in word or deed, revenge, unkindness, deceit,

hatred, spite, presumption, and the base acts that follow such feelings. Very likely you may say to me,—Even granting before we hear it that this recipe be of such wonderful virtue in itself, still very likely it requires so much strength to apply it, or so much skill that it is useless; as if we had a medicine of rare and great efficacy, held in a crystal flagon so heavy that neither the sick man nor his nurse could raise it to the sufferer's mouth. I have a story that some travelers went far into foreign countries, and when they returned they brought account of two things that were very marvelous, in a certain far-off place they had visited. One was a kind of adamant which was so hard that nothing could break or shatter it, although the inhabitants had secret methods of working it; and the other was a certain medicine which was indeed a cure-all, so that the favored community was wholly free from all bodily ailments. When the travelers had reported this, the people to whom they returned, forthwith sent to the fortunate country, requesting that the medicine be forwarded to them. And so indeed it was, and in due time arrived; but it came *enclosed in a piece of the adamant*?

However, this is not a sound objection, because my recipe requires not that anything be done, only that a certain effort be made. If I were to say to you, In order to put to flight this brood of evils, you must gain a certain measure of self-command, or you must acquire a certain weight of wisdom, or you must gather a large amount of knowledge, or you must obtain wide influence, or you must unfold consummate caution and prudence, you might answer, Go to! You trifle with us. Your words are sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. You offer a remedy more costly than gems, rarer than rubies. For who can do all these things? Besides, your prescription is as old as Time; and all the strength of men from the beginning has not availed to gather ingredients for a drop of the elixir large enough to cure the spite that festers in one little village. Well, I say none of these things, nor aught else that implies anything accomplished. The recipe I shall give you involves simply an endeavor, and the immediate success or failure of it counts nothing. It matters not whether the undertaking be accomplished; the potency is in the undertaking.

Now, to set down the recipe.—But first, think not that this

bland and healing remedy is an invention of mine, made of rare simples gathered in far journeyings, and combined with study and skill by me. No; I found it in the wisdom of a German poet, condensed thus,—“Fight against the wrong thou doest, not receivest.” That is the remedy whose virtues I have pronounced so rare and absolute,—“Fight against the wrong thou doest, not receivest.”

You will see that nothing is required that is impossible to the weakest person. The recipe says not even fight with any given strength, still less with any given result; but only fight; which is to be understood to mean, Fight as much as you can, and fight against the wrong done *by* you, not against the wrong done *to* you. That is all. All! But it is as strong as Truth, as beautiful as Scripture, as healing as Love!

Let us look at some of the qualities of this blessed remedy, which without fail can cure the little moral evils and shames of life; the qualities which make it so simple and safe, so certain, and of so great effect.

The great point in this rule is, that it requires only endeavor; not success, not accomplishment, but only trying. Now effort is by nature continuous and unlimited. If we were required to do something, then when it were done the activity were done too. There is left only a stated fact, a thing accomplished. But if the requirement be to *try* to do, this means continuous activity, constant watchfulness, unceasing exertion. Consequently this remedy is one that acts on the ills of life not after the manner of a blow, which delivers its force and is done, but after the manner of a weight, that presses, presses, or pulls, all the time, and always with the same power. Now to understand how important a quality of the remedy this is, we must remember that many of the mean and despicable ills of life,—and oh how contemptible these little ills are!—many of these, I say, in truth, most of them, would cease to afflict us, and even to exist, if only we would pay no attention to them. All the wrongs that are malicious, or presumptuous, or conceited, all the little evils done for anger, spite, envy, hatred, jealousy, would pass over our heads harmlessly and vanish like smoke if we gave no heed to them. To fight against the wrongs done *to* us is the same thing as to give heed to them; and it is on this at-



tention that they thrive, on "this meat that our Cæsar grows so great." But if a man be busy fighting the wrong done *by* him thereby he will destroy all those wrongs done to him which perish if they be neglected. Whoever is striving constantly against the wrong he does, be assured, will have no time to busy himself with the wrongs he receives. Besides, he will be too well occupied even to see much of the wrong which would trouble him otherwise; he will not see or feel every little ill done to him. Great sensitiveness usually means great idleness. Thus this remedy occupies the ground with a man's struggle with himself, producing nobleness, and leaves no soil for those strifes of one man with another, which stir base passions and multiply bad deeds.

Again, this remedy is potent, because so easily applied. This is as if some diseases might be cured by going out of doors, or by looking at the sky. For it is in every one's power to busy himself with himself, and to strive. If he conquer not at first, still he may strive. If the thousandth time he prevail not, still he may strive. And he who gets up every time he falls, as the proverb is, sometime shall get up to stand. Therefore, every one may begin to apply this remedy, as abundant as clean water or fresh air, to the ills of life; and certain it is that if there be no cure it is for lack of application; for if everyone were absorbed in the effort to destroy the little ills done by him, not to him, the source of all diseases, that is, vile self-neglect, would be cut off.

Again, it is an important quality of this remedy that it applies force exactly at the point where it is efficient. For not only can every one strive against the wrongs which he himself does, but it is against his own wrong-doing that he can fight with some effect. But to war against the wrong done *to* us, "is as vain and as impossible as to fight against the arrow shot off yesterday, and makes wretched indeed sufferer and doer both." We can strive with some result against doing wrong, but what can you do against the wrong done? We are powerless against receiving a wrong. Inherent in this remedy, therefore, is the wisdom of the Stoics, which, as I have told you often, I never weary of dwelling on, namely, that all things good and ill fall into two classes, the things in our power and the things not in our power. Strive not, therefore, against the evils not in your

power, for they will take care of themselves, according to the nature of the universe; but strive against the evils that are in your power, for these are the things left to your care, and you shall be able to prevail. "This thou must always bear in mind," says Antoninus, "what is the nature of the whole and what is thy nature, and how this is related to that, and what kind of a part it is of what kind of a whole, and that there is no one who hinders thee from always doing and saying the things which are according to the nature of which thou art a part. \* \* \* \* If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee, but keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately, if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy. And *there is no man who is able to prevent this.*" To fight against the wrong we do, not receive, is to be busy with the things which are in our power, wherein every man's efforts go far toward the world's redemption, and the efforts of all would bring Paradise hither.

Again, this remedy is very potent, because, although only endeavor is prescribed, actually it does include things done; and great things. If the mere fighting be so powerful, truly the victory when won is power itself. The majesty of victorious struggle with ourselves, has been a sight ravishing to the eyes of the sages of all times and places; yes, and the elegance of it; for, as Emerson said, self-command is a wonderful elegance, felt even by the violent, the foolish, and the vain, although they may not know the secret of the power which subdues them. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." "If a man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors." "If a man can not improve himself, how can he improve others." "To see what is right and not to do it, is the part of a cowardly mind." "Give me, O Lord, these two desires, to see and to question myself." "Whom am I to conquer? Not the Persians, nor the distant Medes, nor the warlike tribes who dwell beyond Dacia; but

avarice, ambition, and fear of death, which subdue the conquerors of the nations." "The grandest of empires is to rule oneself." "The ambassadors of King Antigonus invited Zeno to sup with other philosophers, who, as they drank, boasted of their learning. But Zeno kept silent. When the ambassadors asked him what they should report of him to their king, he replied, "What you see; for the thing hardest to control of all is speaking." These, and such like crystals of speech scattered over the ages, show plainly what is thought of the dignity, power and beauty of victory over oneself. Hence the great potency in this remedy for the petty plagues and distressing small ills of our lives. He who neglecting the wrong done to him fights against the wrong done by himself, and gains the victory, has armed himself to ride over and tread down also the injuries aimed at him. For having conquered the impulse in himself to do an injury, he has vanquished the force which overcame the enemy who did him injury. Therefore it is certain he will subdue his enemy in time, and win him over, since he has subdued the force which subdued his enemy.

Finally, this remedy is very powerful because it encourages love, since we tend to love those whom we benefit or guard. I pray you notice that. It is a very lovely law of the affections. No one can benefit or take care of another without beginning to love him. And we tend to hate those whom we strive against. This remedy, therefore, has a mighty force. For reflect how many of the wrongs of life spring from hatred. I think no fact in human life is better established than this law, that we shall love those whom we benefit or try to benefit. What greater service, now, can we do another man, than to fight against the wrong we do him, neglecting the wrong he does us? Therefore, this remedy has love in it, "which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and never fails, though prophecies and tongues shall cease and knowledge vanish. It diffuses peace and quiet, allays the pain of our ills, cools our fevers and our heats, keeps the mind sane and disarms fury. Moreover, there is another way in which love is a potency in this remedy. If we struggle with our own misdoing, we feel that we are living in a sphere where we are out of the power of all others, as Antoninus said; where no malice can

terrify and no harm reach us; for no one can prevent our endeavor, nor interfere with the result of it. Said one of the sages, "Not even divine power could change into defeat a man's victory over himself." Therefore, we shall not be so prone to anger, or hatred, because we shall find ourselves lifted high above injury. Antoninus said, "It is peculiar to man to love even those who do wrong. And this happens if when they do wrong it occurs to thee that they are kinsmen and that they do wrong through ignorance and unintentionally." That, you know, was the great Stoic doctrine, and we have met it, too, in Socrates, namely, that knowledge and virtue are one, and that no man ever lived who did anything so much against his own interests as to do wrong, really understanding it to be wrong. "And," goes on the gentle Stoic, "remember that soon both of you will die; and above all, that the wrong-doer has done thee no harm; *for he has not made thy ruin, faculty worse than it was before.*"

How great a remedy is this, in which love exists by chemical reaction, as it were, not being mixed into the potion, but evolved in it by the action of the ingredients on each other, since by the nature of the remedy we benefit others, and by benefitting, love. Whoso hates

"Shuts himself out from the great realm of life.  
That man must have more than the power of God  
To draw henceforth another breath of joy:  
Whereas love's fount has power with one sole draught  
To make the poorest life and longest, rich,  
And fill its parting dreams with endless bliss."





## JESUS OF NAZARETH.

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I am to speak to you of Jesus of Nazareth. The reflections which I shall offer you will be formed around this outline, namely:

I. That Jesus was a man.

II. That he was a glorious man.

III. Therefore, that

1. He lived in very close contact with his age and time.

2. This close contact and sympathy with his time was manifested in

(a) A simple natural conformity to many current notions, commonly received among the people, spiritual non-essentials, touching the inner life only remotely. (b) A deep breathing-in of that prophecy, onward motion, spiritual freedom, which the age needed, for which it was ripe—the universal in the local. (c) The opposition of this prophecy, spirituality and freedom within him to the current formalism.

IV. Hence his great hold on human life, on the souls of all succeeding generations.

V. The mental quality of Jesus.

VI. The quality of the heart of Jesus.

We have come to understand that Jesus was a man, a real, living man, acting, walking, eating, sleeping, thinking, speaking, grieving, rejoicing, loving and praying.

Now this is a very great discovery, not made for eighteen centuries after that glorious life had ended. In the first three

gospels Jesus is not a man. He is a great special legate from Yahweh, called the Messiah, Christ, miraculously born, miraculously living, miraculously dying, miraculously leaving the earth, by like miracle ascending into the sky. In the fourth gospel Jesus is still less a man. He appears on the scene and disappears, without warning or method, as if in regard to him the greatest extreme crises of life, birth and death, were matters of no moment or value. Throughout the early years of the church his nature was discussed endlessly, but he was never a man and a brother, always something other than human. Some held him to be chief of the angels, the first and highest of created beings, clothed with a body that thus he might come on the earth conveniently. Others said he was the divine Word not created, but being from all eternity, and that he was not invested with flesh, his body being a mere phantom without existence. Others agreed that he was the divine Word uncreated and eternal, but considered his body real and substantial. Still others said that the Word was not only united in Jesus with a human body, but with a human soul too, so that he was at once both God and man. This was accepted by a great council of the Church, and has continued to be the orthodox doctrine to the present day. Thus you see, through all these ages, we have had no Jesus, only Christ; no brother-man, but an officer, a legate; no man of our kindred, but a being of strange nature and powers, invested with startling wonders, supernatural, preternatural, inexplicable, a pure creation, as it seems to me, of dogma and legend. But we have discovered, not long ago, that Jesus was a man. So recently, indeed, have we discovered this, that very few people there are in the world who understand and believe it; which is indeed a great pity, for when we come to that truth as we should, it is a most emancipating truth, lifting humanity very high, and filling us with fires of aspiration to go up to the mount of vision with this elder brother of men.

But secondly, Jesus was not only a man, but a very glorious man, a great prophet, a seer, a soul kindled with the divine light, full indeed of divinity. If any one have eyes to see, and believe in God, he will see that our own present is divine. And what is that but to say that God lives, or, as Jesus phrased it, "My father worketh hitherto." And if divine now, then

surely still divine when, even as now I speak, this present has become no longer present, but past. A moment ago was divine because God was in it; it is still divine to thought, worship and memory, by that same thought of God. It is ordained an evangelist by our blessed memory. All the past, therefore, is divine, having once been present; all is still precious, having been the passage onward of man, filled with his life, his thoughts, his love, devotion, worship. That is most precious which, while being acted, was most divine. Among these stands that grand and holy life of Jesus, among the very highest that this earth has known, lifting indeed the head so high into the heavens that the heavens and earth become as one. And a very momentous life to the world! I turn to it evermore and contemplate it, without abasement, because without superstition; without fear, because without servitude; with love and gratitude, because with freedom; for no man loves what he loves not in the freely outgoing heart.

Hence, thirdly, because Jesus was a glorious man, living the high life of the spirit, he stood in close contact with his time. For no man can be grand and high who in-breathes not the present spirit of God. This standing in close contact with his time was shown in part by his simple conformity to many current notions. He was a true child of his age and people; he lived, acted and spoke in close sympathy with all about him; he felt the pulse, he understood the heart-beat, he interpreted the signs of the time; he was moulded consciously and unconsciously by its needs; he partook also of its limitations, its misapprehensions. Jesus himself seems to have felt that he was the true interpreter of his time. "How is it," he says, reproaching the people, "that ye can not discern the signs of these times?" He told them they seemed to understand the meaning of the cloud in the West, yet seemed but little sensitive to the spiritual atmosphere. He would not have been his own great self if he had not felt through and through his soul the infinite life-currents of his time, as sensitive as still water to the breath of the spirit, reflecting in his being the soul of the time as a star lies in the wave, full, clear and bright, but breaking by the billow's motion into a thousand disjointed beams. If thus he stood in quick relation with the life about him, which is a

necessary condition of such grandeur of spirit as his was, it is not to be supposed that he could escape all misapprehensions, limitations, difficulties. Even to these likewise (for they were deeply imbedded in the spirit of his time) his soul was sensitive. He must drink a mixed cup, he must partake of error along with inspiration. He must be brought and exalted to divine insight; but also he must be left in much error, in many partial, local, temporary ideas.

A great spirit is always in some way beyond his time; but never in all ways, for that were to be monstrous; that were to be cast in an unfeeling mold which would make greatness impossible, or else to be a spirit from another sphere, unable to come to our apprehension, sympathy or brotherhood. In true and entire relation to his time, I say, the great and healthy soul of Jesus must have stood. Therefore, at times he surpassed himself; at other times, he mingled his lofty and sublime teaching with partial or local colors.

This view is not speculation; it is the result of reading the gospels carefully and critically. For example: One of the ideas highly characteristic of Hebrew teaching is that of a Satan, a chief or ruling devil, the king of an infernal court consisting of angels who rebelled and fell from heaven before earth's creation, as also of some of the wicked races before the deluge. This Satan was supposed to have much power, and to be an active and industrious tempter of men, to their destruction. Now, it is very clear, if the record shall be trusted, that Jesus accepted quite implicitly the current notion of Satan. That the disciples regarded Jesus as believing in Satan is plain from the story of the temptation, which is recorded by Mark, and told circumstantially by Matthew and Luke with perfect and simple good faith. The conversation between Satan and Jesus is narrated. But not only in this story is this belief ascribed to the Master, but in various direct conversations he expresses it himself. When the Pharisees charged him with exorcising by means of Satan, the Master answered, "If Satan cast out Satan, then he is divided against himself. And, if by Beelzebub I cast out devils, then tell me, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges."\* At another time he said to them,

\* Mt. xii, 26-27.

“Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”\* And again, if the fourth gospel shall be trusted, Jesus announced the Messianic triumph and judgment by saying, “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out,”† the “prince of this world” being a well known designation of Satan at that time, and it being the well understood and anticipated work of the Messiah to subdue and cast him out. Now, thus it stands in the gospels. If we shall trust the record, Jesus took this current notion as he found it, without thinking of it or questioning it, but using the language, and I suppose holding the ideas. It is usual in regard to this, and similar passages, with those who are resolved to admit no element of error in Jesus’ thought or knowledge, to rest on the theory of accommodation. Jesus, they say, knew that Satan was a mere myth, an empty name; but in his teaching he accommodated his language to the ideas of his hearers, so as better to get at their minds, and disarm their prejudices against his other and more important truths. Well, let any rejoice in this device who may or can. For myself, I have such faith in that grand prophetic spirit that I believe he would have instructed the people in the folly of the common notion of Satan if he himself had suspected it; at least, that he would not have used language which directly implied or expressed a belief contrary to his real view. Would you like your minister to preach in that manner? And is it noble and blessed, in your souls, to think of Jesus as an “accommodating” teacher?

Another current belief of the time was that of a place of dire punishment, an abode of evil spirits and retreat of Satan, called Hell. That the disciples believed Jesus shared this notion also is evident throughout the gospels:—“Whosoever shall say (to his brother) Thou fool! shall be in danger of hell fire.”‡ “It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”§ “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to kill both soul and body in hell.”§ “It is better for thee to enter life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.”\*\* “Then shall he say also unto them on the left

\*Jh. viii, 44. †Jh. xii, 31. ‡Mt. v, 22. §Mt. v, 30. ¶Mt. x, 28. \*\*Mt. xviii, 8.



hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. \* \* \* \* And these shall go away to everlasting punishment.”\* To a like purpose is the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, the latter being represented as in hell, in torments, and praying for a drop of water to cool his tongue devoured by the flames.† Such passages make it clear that, at least in the opinion of the Evangelists, this belief was accepted by Jesus.

Another current notion of the time was that of demoniacal possession; various diseases, of which little or nothing was known, were thought to be caused by demons entering into and possessing the human body, subjecting it to dumbness, deafness, violent spasms, and other disorders. Wherefore, the only cure for such cases was thought to be the expulsion of the demon from his abode in the body. That Jesus shared in this common delusion admits of no doubt, if we shall trust the record and read it carefully. Take for example the case of the herd of swine into which Jesus permitted some demons to enter after he had expelled them from the human body.‡ Not only is the incident itself decisive, but the demons speak to Jesus recognizing his Messianic mission, and on their entreaty to be allowed to enter the swine, Jesus speaks to them, saying, “Go.” Again, the first Gospel relates that a possessed child was brought to the disciples, who failed to cast out the demon; then “Jesus rebuked the devil and he departed out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour:”|| and when the disciples asked the cause of their failure, he replied, “Because of your unbelief,” and added, “This kind goeth out by nothing save by prayer.” Again—“John answered and said, Master we saw one casting out devils in thy name and we forbade him, because he followed not with us; and Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us.”§ The seventy disciples return to Jesus with joy, saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;” and Jesus accedes to the fact, and enjoins them not to rejoice too much in this power, but rather that their names are written in heaven.\*\* And Jesus speaks of the woman whose infirmity he healed as one “Whom Satan hath bound lo! these eighteen years.”†† From these and

\*Mt. xxv, 41-46.  
§Lc. ix, 49-50.

†Lc. xvi, 19.  
\*\*Lc. x, 17.

†Mt. viii 28: Mc. ix, 29.  
††Lc. xiii, 16.

||Mt. xvii, 14.

many like passages, it is plain that the Evangelists regard Jesus as believing in demons and their possession of human bodies. What is there to rebut their authority? Were they such slaves to their prejudices that they utterly failed to understand the Master in such plain points? Yet as before I said, so again,—Who can believe that Jesus saw the folly of it and yet not only omitted to instruct his nearest friends and personal disciples, but even spoke to them as if he saw it not? Away with this view of Jesus. “One evening,” says Emerson’s son, “after a conversation, when zealous radicals had explained that the death of Jesus had been simulated, not real, and planned beforehand by him and his disciples for its effect on the people, while he thereafter kept in hiding, my mother tells that she asked my father, ‘Should you like to have the children hear that?’ He said ‘No; it’s odious to have lilies pulled up and skunk cabbages planted in their places.’”

Other points I might discuss touching the close relation of Jesus to his own time, but must pass them by. But again I say, this close contact with his age and time was, in him, as it must be in every great heart, a deep breathing-in of the prophecy and the forward motion for which that age was ripe. Every age is a record of past ages, and a prophecy of future ages. Every epoch, community, place, is a garden where the flowers were planted long ago, and the blooming of them tended and nursed by other hands long gone, by the parents, the sufferers, the laborers of past times. But the flowers and fruit of the garden hide the seeds of the future garden, that our children and children’s children shall see bloom. In each epoch the past lies down, like a spent traveler in a hostlery, and at the same hour a fresh courier is mounted to carry forward the king’s message. Without figure, each time or age is a product or sum of the past, and also a prophecy or heralding of the future. But the two voices, the past and the future, differ very much in their volume and loudness. The voice and record of the past is prominent, heard on all the street-corners, in shops, halls, legislatures, churches, schools. The prophecy of the future is a delicate voice, heavenly, quiet, overborne and drowned in the din of the past, in roar of trade, the clashing of bells, triumphant bands of music, processions, orations. Amid the shouts, cheers, swayings

to and fro, the tramp of feet, the calls to action, amid these, I say, the prophecy of the future retreats to quiet places, to be heard only by quiet and holy souls, by the reverent, the listening, the pure-hearted, unselfish, fearless and free.

Now this prophecy of the future always is the voice of universal human nature, the ideal, the free, the spiritual, the everlasting, sounding quietly but clearly amid the noise and tumult of the local, the formal, the ceremonial. It is the voice of Faith above the creeds, of Thoughts above conventions or current frenzies and bigotries, the voice of the freedom of the spirit above the bondage and fetters of the letter, the psalm of worship above forms and restraints, the call of the universal and heavenly above the partial and the earthly.

Therefore, the quiet and devout spirit who thus is so close to *h s* age as to feel therein the beating heart of *all* ages, as well those coming as those gone, and to know the tone of the free, the pure, the unseen things which are eternal, over the noise of the bound, the adulterated, the visible ceremonies which are temporal,—such a spirit, I say, will take, without looking at them, many current notions, as it is recorded Jesus did, which touch not the difference between the transitory and eternal (or he perceives not that they touch thereon), but he will oppose surely and grandly other current thoughts of the time which do touch the difference between the formal and the spiritual, the partial and the universal, the temporal and the eternal. And thus Jesus did.

Let us look at two instances:

One of the most important features in the intensifying of Judaism which marks the time of Jesus, was the development of that superstitious veneration for the Mosaic Law, which characterized the Jews of that epoch. During and after their captivity at Babylon, their obedience to the Law became passionate and fanatical. Their Law stood to them in place of territory, and was their one bond of union in the land of strangers. They clung to it as not only the symbol, but the means and support of, their nationality. Their covenant, their bond with Yahweh, was the Law. It was in their eyes divine, absolutely perfect, their shrine, altar, offering, religion. It touched and regulated not only worship and sacrifice, but the most minute business and duty of

daily life. It was their household deity. This passion sank deeper and deeper into the national mind, until it became almost a madness, a kind of fury. The Scribes toiled over every letter, counted every mark, found some mystery in every point and character. Jerusalem was kept in constant terror by riots incited by zealots for the Law. The edifices of Herod were attacked, lest images should be concealed in them. Bands of assassins arose pledged to kill any one seen disobeying the Law. Phrases from Moses were copied on parchment and worn on the forehead or elsewhere. "We are Moses' disciples," said the Pharisees to the man born blind; "as for this fellow, we know not whence he is."\*

We think that to-day we reverence this Bible. Our cold western nature begins not to understand the fire of the Hebrew. Imagine the veneration and superstition of the most orthodox devotee increased a hundred or a thousand fold, and you will have some slight conception of that passion for the Law which filled the Jews. The learned scholar, Sophocles, at Harvard University, told me once that when a Mohammedan ambassador in this country visited the college, some one, desiring to please him, took from its case a manuscript of the Koran and brought it to the Turk; but the good Moslem, on seeing the sacred volume, seized it from the hand of the infidel with signs of horror, ran and put it back in its case, and shut the lid, that the holy book might not be desecrated by the touch of infidel hands. "Now," said Sophocles, "conceive that Moslem's emotion and fanaticism over the sacred book increased a thousand times, and you will begin to understand the fervor, the intensity, of the Jews regarding the Mosaic Law at the Christian Era."

Bearing these facts in mind, let me now read you some passages from the Sermon on the Mount, paraphrasing them in order thus to offer a running commentary, that their meaning and force may be plain; and then picture to yourselves the divine courage and truth of the great soul that dared to stand on the hillside and speak such views:—"Oh ye people, do you dream that this great law of yours is perfect? I tell you nay. Yet think not I have come to destroy it, I have come to add to it, to expand it, to complete it with spiritual fullness. You know that it says in the Ten Commandments, 'Thou shalt not

\*Jh. ix, 28-29.

kill.' Well, that is only partial. I tell you that everyone angry with his brother is in spirit like a murderer. You know the precept also in Deuteronomy, where Moses allows you to divorce your wife simply by giving a writing of divorcement.\* I tell you that Moses was wrong; there is but one cause of divorce writ in heaven. Again, both in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Moses commands you to keep your oaths unto the Lord.† I show you a better way,—Swear not at all, but speak with simple Yes and No. You remember Moses' precept in Leviticus, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.‡' That is wrong; that is barbarous; I say unto you, Resist not the evil-doer after that manner. You know that in Leviticus it is said, 'Love thy friend;§' that is poor virtue; that falls very short; I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for your persecutors."

One of the particulars of the Law invested with peculiar sanctity, and enforced with fierce rigor, was the observance of the Sabbath. Even in time of war there could be no defence made on that day. We read that one thousand followers of Matthias the Maccabee were surprised in a cave on the Sabbath by Syrian troops, and slain without resistance, because it was Sabbath day, on which they would not fight. Now let us see how Jesus treated this literalism. A man came to him, we are told, with a withered hand, and the narrow literalists stood watching, watching, to see what he would do. Tell me, said Jesus, divining their thoughts, tell me now, whether I shall do good this day or evil, save life or neglect it? But the sullen crowd was silent. Then the prophet, in the simple words of Mark, looking around about on them with indignation, being grieved with their hardness of heart, said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand; and he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other.§ Jesus' disciples, one Sabbath day, plucked and eat corn when they were out in the fields, and the Pharisees complained of them as Sabbath-breakers. But Jesus answered in wonderful way, that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, and that man was therefore lord of the Sabbath. When at another time they sought to slay Jesus for healing on the Sabbath day, he returned the sublime answer, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."\*\*

\*Deut. xxiv, 1.

†Levit. xix, 12: Deut. xxiii, 21.

‡Levit. xxiv, 20.

§Levit. xix, 18.

§Mc. iii, 1-6.

\*\*Jh. v, 17.



Now, remembering the fierce legal fanaticism of the whole community, what magnificence of courage, power, truthfulness, prophecy, devotion, shines forth in such words and deeds of the Master. Who was this Galilean peasant, this carpenter of a despised little town, that he should speak heedless of the fury of a nation of formalists, defy the authority of Moses, proclaim a holiness above the Law, and in the might of his own soul dare that authoritative "*I say unto you,*" so that the messengers returned and told the Scribes that he spoke not like to them, but as one having authority,—who was he to do this, the Galilean peasant?

Another particular in that intensifying of Judaism which resulted from the captivity and disasters of the people, was the development and power of the Traditions or Oral Law. In addition to the written Law of Moses, it was taught that there was a large body of regulations given to Moses on Sinai and handed down by tradition from age to age through the venerable and eminent characters of their history. It was believed that the Traditions spoken to Moses on Sinai, by him were told to Joshua, and by Joshua again to the line of prophets, and by them at last to the scribes and doctors of the law, who had preserved them sacred in memory. Whence these Traditions were a part of the Hebrew religion, as much as the written Scriptures, or the Temple worship. These were also increased by a multitude of rules adopted from time to time by the Rabbins in order to protect the law, according to the traditional direction, "*Make a fence for the law;*" that is, observe so much more than is required that you will be sure to observe all; a caution like that of those Christians who deem it wise to believe all they can that they may be sure to believe a saving quantity. This immense body of traditional laws, rules and observances was venerated and obeyed by the people with no less awe and fervor than the laws of the stone tables themselves. The most minute and trivial occupations of life were governed and overshadowed by these traditional requirements. In illustration of this curious subject, quite unparalleled in the history of the world, I quote a passage from these rules of the elders, taken from a prayer-book of the German Jews, relative to "*lighting candles on the eve of the Sabbath, which is the duty*

of every Jew,—” “ With what sort of wick and oil are the candles of the Sabbath to be lighted, and with what are they not to be lighted? They are not to be lighted with the woolly substance that grows upon cedars, nor with undressed flax, nor with silk, nor with rushes, nor with leaves out of the wilderness, nor with moss that grows on the surface of water, nor with pitch, nor with wax, nor with oil made of cotton-seed, nor with the fat of the tail or the entrails of beasts. Nathan Hamody saith it may be lighted with boiled suet; but the wise men say, be it boiled or not boiled, it may not be lighted with it. It may not be lighted with burnt oil on festival days. Rabbi Ishmael says it may not be lighted with train oil because of honor to the Sabbath,” and so following.\*

Connected with this oral law was another particular of the intensified Judaism of the later Jews, namely, the existence and authority of the Scribes and Rabbins. The law, which had become such a passion, became, in consequence, “a deep and intricate study.” Those who devoted their lives to it and became learned in its precepts and skillful in their application, were regarded with great veneration and homage. “Learning in the law became the great distinction.” It was, besides, a necessity; for when written rules are made to interfere minutely in daily life, they require to be interpreted and adapted endlessly; and only trained and learned interpreters could be trusted where infringement was regarded with so much horror and fear. Hence, in interpreting and applying the law, the Scribes and Rabbins created and transmitted the vast body of traditions before-mentioned, which were obeyed with reverence and awe. They thus became the august and venerated custodians of the whole religion of the people; they were the keepers of the nation’s conscience; the people looked up to them, says a historian, “with implicit confidence in their infallibility;” they composed the great national court, the Sanhedrim; they held a spiritual trust and supremacy, which overshadowed the mere priesthood, “till at length the maxim was openly promulgated, ‘The voice of the Rabbin, the voice of God.’” Their influence was carried into all the corners of the land by the new system of synagogues in addition to the temple worship, each of which had its pre-

\*Smith’s Bible Dict., Art. “Pharisees.”

siding Rabbi. The Scribes were inseparably connected with the Pharisees. The Pharisees almost may be defined as the followers of the Scribes; and they embraced the strength and mass of the nation, the Sadducees being a small and exclusive minority. The Pharisees were separatists, purists, advocates and supporters of a perfect and unmixed Judaism against all foreign influence. They arose in the great struggles of the Maccabeans, and were the descendants, crystalized into a class, of the zealous Jewish and anti-Greek party of that period. Their traditions were recommended by patriotism and national enthusiasm. They were the incarnation of the Jewish ideal of the times, the very flower and fruit of the intensified Judaism succeeding the captivity. They were equally zealous for the Law and for the Traditions of the Elders, which they daily practiced with an intensity of formalism never surpassed, probably never equalled. The stricter Pharisees were regarded as the type of piety and religion. They were the great and honored class in society. "The Scribes and Pharisees" is a formula expressing the whole weight, power, character, and sanctity of Judaism.

How, now, did Jesus treat these powerful and "venerated formalists, when they stood in the way of that spiritual religion, that pure religion of the heart, of which he was the fearless and truthful prophet? Think not, said Jesus, that mere outward conformity and ritualistic punctuality will avail; "for I tell you that unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."\* Do you complain that I sit at table with these poor outcast people, these Publicans and sinners, lest I may, perhaps, eat something ritually unclean? "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice!"† He made occasion to tell the people that a man was not defiled by what he ate, but by what came forth from his heart. His disciples informed him that the Pharisees were offended with this saying; but Jesus told them that these formalists were not plants of his Father's planting, and should be rooted up. "Let them alone (he said); they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."‡ You reject me and my teach-

\*Mt. v, 20.

†Mt. ix, 13.

‡Mt. xv, 12-14.

ings, but the rejected block becomes the corner-stone, and "I tell you the kingdom of God shall be taken from you (who imagine yourselves its only heirs), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."\* Behold the Pharisee and the Publican at prayer,—the "self-estimated saint" rejoicing in his piety, and the "acknowledged sinner" who will not lift his eyes whither his thoughts fly in the prayer of humility! I tell you that the publican goes down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.† Oh hypocrites, who love the chief seats and the homage of men; who devour widows' houses and make long prayers for a pretence, pay tithes and observe ceremonies, but omit the weightier matters of sincerity, justice and love; who are like whited sepulchres and half-cleaned caps, fair to be seen, but foul within!‡

These were the fearless reproofs of this voice of God, this prophet of the soul.

That is the Master unto me! That power is what seizes and holds the human soul, I think, and makes Jesus the religious inspiration of all these nineteen centuries since.

Any man does well for himself and others who simply and truthfully tells what he thinks, describes what he sees. It is he who is the living witness of the moment. He opens his lips to drink of the divine stream of truth, justice, love, that pours on forever from God. It is free to him to drink of it, and free to all who will. He who drinks will speak and act with authority which is divine. There will be no mere appearance, no pretence in him. He will be all real and true. He will tell what is the real and moving experience of his own soul. He will utter what his thoughts have toiled with and cleared up; he will not keep back anything; he will say naught because it is customary, or popular or easy; he will not recite any creed or echo any synod, or follow a fashion, or bow to an idol, or bend to a book; he will not robe himself in any past though it be magnificent; he will not be drawn away by any future though it be seductive. He will be simple, real and true, in the present. He will speak what is plain and real to his eyes. He will believe the omnipresence of the One from whose eternal stream of

\*Mt. xxi, 43.

†Lc. xviii.

Mt. xxiii. Lc. xi, 39 f.

justice he drinks. If we lay hold of such a man, it is into the company of God he takes us, and with divine strength that he invigorates us. But when tradition replaces the soul; when men and teachers require only to repeat what has been sanctioned, or to attach religion to any time or to any person, it being for every time and for every person; when they replace what is living now in themselves by what lived at some time in others; when what is witnessed is passed by and what is felt or thought is unsaid, while what is memorized is repeated; when religion is not a living testimony of man, but rests on records, rituals, or readings,—then flows through the church, the school, the market, court and dwelling “a stream of ice and death.” “It is true,” exclaims a great teacher, “that tradition characterizes the preaching of this country; that it comes out of the memory and not out of the soul; that it aims at what is usual, and not at what is necessary and eternal; that thus historical Christianity destroys the power of preaching, by withdrawing it from the exploration of the moral nature of man where the sublime is, where are the resources of astonishment and power. \* \* \* Scarcely in a thousand years does any man dare to be wise and good, and so draw after him the tears and blessings of his kind. \* \* \* It is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was; that he speaketh, not spake. \* \* \*

\* Once leave your own knowledge of God, your own sentiment, and take secondary knowledge as Saint Paul’s, or George Fox’s, or Swedenborg’s, and you get wide from God with every year this secondary form lasts; and if, as now, for centuries, the chasm yawns to that breadth that men can scarcely be convinced there is in them anything divine.”\*

Well then, would Jesus, who would have no master, be our master? Think you that he who went but into his own soul would have us leave that temple of God, even to go to his soul? No. But if he be not Lord and King, then he is on the plane of brotherhood with us, a man as we are men. This transfigures humanity. Is there any right way to measure human nature but by its highest examples? By what will you define, by the superior limit or the inferior? I will proclaim evermore that the ideal is the natural. Jesus makes the race better worth be-

\*Emerson, “Div. School Address.”



longing to, illustrates it, glorifies and sanctifies it, hallows it. This view of Jesus raises the moral and spiritual. If power be referred to character and not to circumstance or office, no longer are we impressed or overpowered by authority, by miracle, by special mission, or credentials from heavenly courts. Jesus' credentials are his own moral elevation, spiritual life, prophetic sight. These, it is true, are credentials from God, but they are credentials of such sort as one child may bring to another child of the same father and mother, credentials of kindredness, of community of origin, life and nature. His life has called unto us to enter into a like sonship.

I behold Jesus, the child, the man, and the men, the scenes, in a way very real and great, when thus I think of him. I am carried to Nazareth, which I suppose was his birthplace; where no doubt his childhood and youth were passed subject to his parents, and his early manhood subject to his own deep broodings on those quiet and beautiful hills. What his preparation was we can guess but dimly,—what long imaginings, lonely vigils, solitary musings, what wandering in those hills and valleys, what sights and sounds. He plied his trade, I suppose, and worked as a carpenter with his father. Perhaps his spirit took long to ripen. Was he not to neighbors and friends only a simple and friendly country lad, content and unambitious, working at his craft? I suppose no one guessed what was in him, and he himself knew not. He who afterward was so deeply spiritual must have been always simple and unconscious of himself. The records of his home, of those early years, are obscured by the rich legends that gathered about that unknown incubation when the sublime life afterward was displayed. It is in vain that we wish we had of him a larger biography; still less, if he had lived a score of years in public instead of one or two or three, could he have written an autobiography. Of such spirits we catch only glimpses. We can not see divinity so near. We must be left with a gleam of the infinite, to the majesty of our own surmise. But I seem to see him as he grew in that oriental beauty, playful, tearful, hearty, happy, loving, docile, working, learning, growing, thinking, observing, reading, listening, brooding, dreaming, yearning, praying, resolving. He sat in the synagogues on the Sabbath; he visited Jerusalem at times to

hear the imposing worship of the great Temple. He talked along the way with fellow Galileans. He drew away slowly from all political hopes, all the formal prides, exclusive rites and old tyrannies that made the religion of his time dead and drear. He saw that life was departing because no longer any one believed in the soul, but all were intent on Moses and the prophets, as on a dispensation closed, a revelation finished. Religion was formality, truth was repetition, goodness was ceremony. At last, in loneliness and obscurity, and with these thoughts, the ten years of his opening manhood were ended, and at thirty he could be silent no longer, because he was filled with that one thing to say. Then began his brief career as an agitator. He said not to the people, Moses says this, or Jeremiah that, or this again says David or Isaiah. He said, "This is what *I* say; this is how it seems *to me*; this is how *I dare believe* it is; this is what I proclaim." God passed not with past years, he said; what illumined the prophets still shines for you, making clear to the faithful all the conditions and duties of this time. I see, he said, that by renouncing your own reason and conscience, you have made religion ritual and formal, and righteousness mere observance. But unless you have a righteousness better than this of your teachers the Scribes, you will have no part in the kingdom. And as to this kingdom, see how you are all sunk in sensible, external things. You are dreaming of a king who shall conquer your enemies, form a great empire, and rule with glory over the chosen people. But you will find that God chooses all; that many of the outcasts and gentiles from the East and West shall enter before you, for by humility and spiritual life they are prepared better. It shall be the pure in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, and not war-makers, who shall inherit the kingdom.

So I see that great figure, standing and preaching, or talking by the wayside with villagers, or on the lake shores, or on vineyard terraces, disputing with cunning priests who laid traps for him, —teaching "as one having authority, and not as the Scribes," who rested all things on Moses and the Law; preaching to a few who loved but to many who hated, gaining the ear of simple folk by the simple truth of religion shining in him, but rousing the enmity of the powerful by his heresy and liberty.

The end could not be doubtful, nor was it unforeseen nor long delayed; but those few months have named after themselves nineteen centuries, because they were filled with a soul preaching the divine authority of its own rapture and vision.

"There are persons who are not actors," exclaims Emerson, "not speakers, but influences, persons too great for fame, for display, who disdain eloquence, to whom all we call art and artist seems too nearly allied to show and by-ends, to the exaggeration of the finite and selfish and loss of the universal. \* \* \* It is in rugged crises, in unweariable endurance, and in aims which put sympathy out of question, that the angel is shown. But these are heights that we can scarce remember and look up to without contrition and shame. Let us thank God that such things exist."

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I have treated the prophetic devotion and truthfulness of Jesus but imperfectly and scantily, so great is the theme, so ready with rich instances from the stirring scenes of his life. I turn to follow the Scriptures into other features of his character, taking him just as the Gospels picture him. I wish no more than to set before you the man they have set forth, they the Evangelists, not pausing over any critical questions as to the authority of the narratives or discourses, but simply trying to set forth the figure as therein it shines.

I will speak now of the intellectual quality of the Master. Jesus had great intelligence. In our admiration for his holiness, gentleness, courage, and all that make up the moral glories of his character, sometimes we overlook the large as well as incisive intelligence and wit of this great Master. It is well that the world should turn about him chiefly for his goodness; for goodness is the greatest of all things. Weiss has said, very nobly, that whatever the glory of a landscape on which we look, how

magnificent soever its array of earth and sky, yet, if a man enter the scene, or but a boy, who under his jacket has a throb of duty, it is no detraction to say that the splendor of the earth and heavens becomes but as a mite beside that morality. So, likewise, even if it be a bad man that enters on the lovely scene, still he is like a gnarled and crooked tree, misshapen by some storm, or by some unhappy twist when but a sapling. Yet is the core untwisted, out of which skill of hand may make an article as comely and bright as any flower in the meadow, or as a white cloud in the blue heavens. So can the divine hand shape the man's soul which hath become incased in such a twisted and scarred form, yea, and will shape it. This makes even the bad man, when he enters the landscape, a sight before the mind's eye which dwarfs all earthly visions, even though mountains and oceans kindle before the body's eye. Now, as the man is more than the landscape, because of the spiritual part of him, so is heart greater than parts, and pure goodness than keen intelligence. Wherefore, as I have said, it is well that the world has busied itself with the goodness of Jesus, and his devotion, humility, patience, love, self-sacrifice and steady truthfulness unto death.

Nevertheless, Jesus was indeed, if we may apply the common language of life, one of the ablest and strongest-minded men that have come forth as teachers in the world. Partly by endowment he was so. We have no writings of his; yet we have feats of imagination and composition, which we can not think sprang from any other than the central figure whom the Gospels set forth. For great is the poetry and beauty in his wonderful parables, for which he stands quite alone in the world, being the highest exemplar of teaching by parable. Indeed, so true is it that no other has equaled or even approached him, in this respect, and such a new thing was the parable in Hebrew teaching, if we may judge from the Old Testament alone, and altogether new in the singular beauty, grace and fitness which mark Jesus' parables, that an eminent critic has not hesitated to say that Jesus created the parable.\* Also, his poetic use of illustrations from nature, such as in the exquisite and unequaled passage about the lilies which I have read to you this morning,

\*Renan, *Life of Jesus*, chap. x.

and the parable of the storm falling on the rock-founded and on the sand-founded house, and many other such places, show richness and resource of mind. We must do justice to this intellectual power and imaginative scope if we would know the Master as he was.

But much more than by this endowment of wit and imagination, Jesus was a great and strong man intellectually by virtue of his faithfulness or holiness. The power of high morality to give intelligence is one of the noble and great facts of life to look on. It is one of the crowning proofs of God; nay, not so much proof or ground of inference, as direct sight of God. Intelligence flows so straight from goodness that it were a strange thing in the world, the like of which I believe never appeared, if a holy soul were but a dull clod without insight or power. Howbeit, often the reverse is to be seen—I mean that a man who seems very strong and great is but a will-o'-the-wisp, because he has no substance of goodness; like Napoleon, who, though he shone like a fire in battle, in truth was as foolish a man as ever lived. I single not his name for dislike of him, for there are many others the like in history; but because his oriflamme was so splendid, flashing everywhere in the lead; whereby the truth is the more clear, that being without virtue, his flame proved but a flickering of marsh-gas.

Morality confers intelligence and power of mind in many ways. It endows the faculty of attention; it strengthens the mind to dwell long and intently, to be fixed on the same high things continuously. This it does by nourishing force of will to apply the mind; for what is moral strength but a strenuous, as well as rightly directed, will? Also moral excellence confers this power of mind by setting the soul free from lower distractions and desires, so that no longer it is clogged or loaded in its flight, but may soar whither the high things call it, carrying no weight, but rising freely. Again, by moral excellence, there is a constant drawing of the mind by lovely things and themes, so that by this attraction the mind continually is dwelling on them, and attains that power in them which fixed attention and long brooding give. Also, moral worth confers peace and quiet of mind, so that by the mind's simplicity and quietude things are reflected in it as they are, and the mind is able to think by virtue



of the quiet in which it lives. Moral worth also confers health; first health of mind,—I mean vitality, abounding life, prophetic power, and harmony of all the faculties within us, each in his place in order, and all strong together, so that all work together to see the truth, and to know things as they are. Morality confers also health of body; and this is very important. For the mind can work but ill and little in a body poorly quickened and having no health to apply to the mind's labor; but more than this, the mere strength and vitality of the body seem to give an abounding force to the mind, and purity of bodily life conveys no doubt a great excellence of intelligence, a power to know. One critic has said that no little portion of Jesus' intelligence must have come through his lovely harmony by which he kept his body as it were a holy temple, wherein the light of the power of God could dwell. Also, morality confers intelligence by the glorifying and purifying of motive. For when we do earnestly wish to see the truth, we see. Intelligence is widened by singleness of eye, by sincerity of moral aim.

Finally, sound morality helps the intelligence by bringing us into harmony with all things in nature, with all the facts about us, whether of the material universe or of human history. Whereby, first, all things seem to gather themselves to help us, because we are in unison with the Spirit that rules all; and secondly, we see the meaning of all things, are instructed, animated, upbuilt, able to see things as they are, because we are in harmony with the forthcoming of them and with their working together, and with the Power that rules them all "with the glory of a Father."

So, in proclaiming Jesus a powerful man intellectually, I must lay great stress on the might of high morality to create intellectual power. No doubt he shows great endowments; but plainer still is it that the holiness in him communicates to the intelligence in him, until the two together make one quick large mind, looking at things to see them as they are.

Now, intelligence is of two sorts,—first, large intelligence, secondly, keen intelligence. The large intelligence is marked by freedom, by avouchment of the right and the power to think for oneself, by affirmance of the obligation and dignity thus to think, by openness of mind, by love of truth, by a station above

controversy in a calm and quiet air of simple thought for the truth, and by trust and confidence in the truth when found, that always it must prevail in the providence of God; wherefore no human being need take it under his patronage. The large intelligence that thus is free always will live grandly apart from common and local prejudices, from sects, castes, clans and parties, willing to trust itself abroad on the sea of the truth of God, knowing that it can float thereon to no desert places, but to the garden of the Lord. A large intelligence also is marked by large sympathies, by fellowships of humanity, by cutting easily through all the walls of names and creeds which men have raised to separate one from another. Such intelligence feels the common heart of humanity beating through all differences, and therefore wills to open the arms and take to one's heart one's fellow as a man, however he differ in creed or church. The large intelligence is marked, too, by reverence. The mind then grows as Tennyson sings:

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell,  
Till mind and soul, according well,  
Make music vaster than before."

Never will you find such an intelligence sneering or scoffing at views that it shares not, especially if these views be sacred to others; no, but such an intelligence will tread with bare feet wherever men have worshiped, even though imperfectly and blindly worshiped, and will see the "wings of the Holy Ghost stooping unseen," even over Aztec altars. Also the large intelligence will perceive the true drift of forces and events, knowing in all the transitory, in the local and temporary, the one trend and drift of the progress of the ages, the purpose of God, which he brings to pass by "impressing his will in the structure of minds."

Now this large intelligence Jesus had, in grand measure. He shows it in his freedom, as hereinbefore I have said. It blazes out through all the wondrous sentences of the Sermon on the Mount. Everywhere he preaches from his own soul. He is authority, because like the prophets of old he said, "*I say unto you.*" The priests, he said to the people, work in the Temple on the Sabbath day, and you hold that they profane not the Sab-

bath day by doing so; but a greater than the Temple is here. By which astonishing and strong speech I suppose he meant the dignity, the glory of the Son of Man, and all sons of men by virtue of their manhood, whereby they might say, as he in another place, "All that the Father hath is mine," and as the son of the Infinite, I am greater than the Temple.

Again, his large intelligence was shown by his being above all prejudices. His broad sympathies reached out to all men. It was not a good Jew, of his own people,—to bring forward such a one would have been popular, and would have helped him in the common mind,—no, but a Samaritan, a despised one in Israel, who was the hero of that second greatest parable in the world, that of the good Samaritan, he, the gentle-minded one, who took up the poor wayfarer and bound up his wounds, and did him charity first by his own care and then by the service of his purse. I think Jesus made little of the Jewish caste, either in his thoughts or in his sympathies, if we may believe what seems to shine through these gospels; and I do believe it, because also the other side shines through, the Hebraic prejudices; wherefore these I ascribe to the followers who never understood the Master. Jesus taught that it was not being of Jewish blood, or of the chosen people, but being of the heart after the Father's own spirit, that should give a man entrance into the kingdom; and if this heart-fitness he had not, then Jesus said he should be left outside. And should his place be empty? No, said the Master, but the Gentile shall come, from the east, from the west, from the north and the south, and sit down at the heavenly tables with the patriarchs, because they have fulfilled, as Paul phrased it afterward, the law in themselves, which thereby became as good a law unto them as the Jewish Law. Jesus loved to associate with Publicans and sinners. Some students of his life have dwelt much on this trait in him. He never seemed seeking "good society;" he loved to find himself with the outcasts, the poor, the despised, and especially with those whom the Jews called sinners, which is to say with those who were lax in the ceremonies and rites of the Jewish faith. And he handled all things in that broad way which large intelligence follows, as made for man and not man for them, as he said in speaking of the Sabbath.

It is painful to read that in consequence of Jesus' large intelligence, which so was above all local aims and prejudices, he had trouble with his family. We catch plain and sad glimpses of separation. He was not at home with his own, sometimes not even with the nearest ones; and when he left Nazareth, it appears that he withdrew partly because of a family division. They followed him not; they believed not in him. When he was told that some of his brethren wished to speak to him without, I suppose he knew it was no friendly message, and that they would interrupt his gospel; and he said, "He that doeth the will of God is my brother, my mother, my sister." But with all this, Jesus was no controversialist or partizan. We do find in the Gospels very strong invectives. Jesus could be stirred to what John Weiss called "moral wrath." Always the mean, selfish, grasping, cruel, hypocritical traits stirred him so. But for the most part he lived in perfect calm, it seems to me. I feel and see pulsing in his words that one and unutterable faith that could wait and be still. His whole manner always is saying to me, "It is good for a man both to hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." Always he lived as on the mountain height whither he liked to go, where he was lifted up above the struggles, jargon and noise of the market-place, and the controversies of men. When he was led to the tribunal, to stand before Pilate, he brought that mountain serenity with him, and stood in the silence of the heavens. He was very reverential; he never scoffed; he treated with no indifference the national religion, but went to the Temple, took part in the ceremonies. He saw there the sacrilege, of the Temple defiled, and we read that he turned into a fierce giant one day and drove out the traders from the Father's house. He saw the true motion of his time; he knew it must go onward with the spirit, no longer harnessed to the letter. They asked him for a sign, and he answered, "Strange it is that ye know the signs of the weather, and if there be a cloud in the sky at night ye tell what the next day shall be, whether raining or shining, and yet ye know not the signs of these times." And then, says the Evangelist, he turned and walked away, having no more to say to them, but leaving them to ponder wherein they might see the signs of God in those times.

I turn now to speak of Jesus' *keen* intelligence. For this he had too,—not only the large, noble, glorious kind of intelligence, but keen and incisive wit. This kind of mental power is shown in the quick sifting of arguments, the parrying of opponents' thrusts, the detection of craft and cunning. Jesus shows these traits in great effect. When messengers came to ask him, from John the Baptist, whether he was really the Messiah, having sent back his answer, he then turned to the people and spoke to them this searching wit: "You like not John,—do you? He came preaching to you in the wilderness, and you set him at naught. And you like not me any better,—do you?. I come preaching to you in the cities, and you set me at naught. You are like little children who have become angry in their games, and one says to the other, We can not say anything that suits you nor do aught that pleases you; we piped unto you and ye would not dance; when that suited you not, we mourned unto you, and that pleased you as little. What can we do but stop our games and go away? John came neither eating nor drinking, and ye said he had a devil; but when I come preaching to you, yet eating and drinking at your tables and your festivals, do ye like it better? No. Ye say: Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners. But true wisdom is shown by rational conduct.\*

When once he went through the fields on a Sabbath, plucking the corn, and they found fault with him for it, he said to them, Have you read your own Scriptures? Is it permitted to eat the bread that is exposed in the temple on altars? No? But did not David do it once? And ye found no fault with him. And the priests work in the Temple every Sabbath day; yet ye hold them free from blame. Well, go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." These observances are poor helps to doing justice and mercy and kindness. Man is lord of the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath of Man.

One day when they brought a man with a withered hand, and then watched him (as always they were watching him with cunning eyes, and sometimes trying to trap him, to see what he would do or say against the Jewish law), Jesus said to them, knowing their hearts, "Shall I heal this man?" Ah, you say

\*Mt. xi.



it is the Sabbath day. Well, how many of you have had a sheep fall into the pit on the Sabbath day? Did you not then lift out the sheep? And is not a man, then, better than a sheep?"

They came accusing him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils, which is to say that they believed in witchcraft, as was common among the Jews, and in possession by demons as the cause of diseases. Jesus, we may imagine, in Socratic way, talked with them thus, as we may gather from the Evangelists: Did ever you know a kingdom to stand, one part of which was divided against another? If thus Satan gives to me to cast out his own minions, tell me how Satan's power and kingdom shall stand. Furthermore, am I the only one that heals these diseases? Have not your own children done so in many cases? What say you of them? If I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by what power do your own children the like works? But on the other hand, if by the power of God I cast out devils, take note of this, ye scoffers, that even now the kingdom of God is here among you\*

They came to him once complaining because his disciples had been eating improperly, that is to say, they had been eating without washing the hands first, which was heavy guilt, a dire religious offense, in the minds of the Jews. Jesus talked with them thus: Whose rules are transgressed by eating with unwashed hands? Is it the rules of the Elders and the Scribes? It is so. And which is worse, to transgress the laws of the Elders and the Scribes, or the law of God? But did not God say by Moses, Honor thy father and thy Mother? Yes. But have not your elders taught you that if an old man come to his son, saying, I am poor, help me,—the son quickly, when he sees him coming, may pronounce a vow over his property, and then he is excused from helping his old father? Yes, they have taught that. Then I say to you, that by means of your human rules, you are transgressing the laws of God. O, you hypocrites! well did Esaias prophecy of you, saying, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."†

\*Mt. xii.

†Mt. xv.

They came to him once complaining that he gave no authority for his acts, and asking him cunningly what his authority was; so that if he gave none, they might say so, and if he should say, I have the authority of God, they might accuse him of blasphemy. But he was equal to their cunning. He said, "I will tell you, but you must answer me a question first. What say you of John the Baptist? What was his authority? From heaven or of men?" Now they had killed and rejected John, and they reasoned thus, If we say that John had authority of God, he will say then, Why did you reject him? But if we say John had no divine mission, we know not what to do with this mob here; for they call John a prophet, and they will fall on us with fury. So they said, We cannot tell. But what a fall was this for the elders of Israel, that they, before the people and before this country rabbi, whom they had meant to entrap, should be driven to avow ignorance as to whether John in truth were a prophet; for this was such a point as they specially were to judge. What! said Jesus, you, Scribes and Elders, whose very office it is to teach the people, to announce the law and to judge in religious matters, you can not tell whether a man be a true prophet or a pretender? Then you are not fit to be told by me what my authority is.\*

Once some enemies who were laying traps for his words, asked Jesus whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not; or, in other words, whether without impiety a Jew might pay taxes to a Roman Emperor. Now this was no little question; for, although the Jews had paid tribute to their own kings very readily and without thought of profaneness, and even also to foreign monarchs, although the prophets severely had denounced such alliances, yet now the people were in such ferment of religious zeal and expectation of the Messiah as never before, and it had become a part of their faith and worship to abhor Roman power and the tribute to it. Whence, I say, it was no little question that they asked Jesus; for, if he answered that the tribute to Cæsar was lawful, then he was no good Jew, and would be hated by the people, but if that it was unlawful, then he would be rebellious toward the Romans and could be accused to them. Yet this was no strait at all to this prophet, because

\*Mt. xxi.

he had so keen intelligence. Wisdom and understanding not only made him master of that occasion, but also of the wide principles pertaining to it. There is a great realm of thought contained in the few words of Jesus' answer; to show which I will expand them thus: Bring me a coin of the realm. Here is an image and writing on it. Whose image and whose superscription? Then, when they answered Cæsar's, he replied to them, If, then, you have accepted Cæsar's coin, do you owe nothing to the empire that has issued it? This money is a sign and a means of the civil order. You pass it from hand to hand, buy and sell with it. What is this but to enter the civil order and live in it? How can you pay tribute to it against your religion, say you? Hearken and understand: Religion means to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, which a Jew may do in his soul even under the Roman eagles. If, then, we have a duty to the State because we have accepted the State, do that duty, and also keep in your hearts the spiritual duties of religion. "Render to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and to God the things that be God's." I know not that man's wisdom ever has found ought to add to the precepts locked in Jesus' few words at that moment. His questioners, when they heard it, marveled and left him and went away, the apostle says. So may we marvel at the mental scope, but go not away, but draw the nearer and admire.\*

But I must leave these incidents of keen intelligence which gleam through all the gospel stories, instances of quick wit in this great prophet. I turn to Jesus' love of nature. It was a part of his intelligence that he was a tender lover of nature. He alone among the Biblical characters dwells lovingly on flowers. The Hebrews, at least in their literature, were not lovers of flowers. They were adorers of the sublime and great scenes. Mighty, high and awful scenes they speak of continually and sublimely; but not of the delicate, tender, and sweet things lovingly. How Jesus dwells on the blossoms in that beautiful song, as truly it is, of the lilies of the field! He draws many parables and illustrations from nature, from birds, grass, wheat, weeds, the sowing and seeding of the fields, the mustard seed and the tree from it, and the birds that

\*Mt. xxii.

lodge in its branches. All this passed before his eyes and entered his heart and came out in his teaching.

It was a part of Jesus' intelligence that he had great humility. Always this must be so. No man will be large in mind who is proud and haughty in spirit. It can not be; for never can he learn; and besides, never will he value things in their right proportions and measures. With humility always goes spirituality, trust, faith. All of these were parts of Jesus' mental endowment. Continually he was going away into the desert to pray. When he was asked who was the greatest, he took a little child and set him among them, and said, If you take not the kingdom of heaven in such spirit as a child's, you shall never know what heaven is. When some of his disciples wished to be told who should be greatest among them, he answered, He shall be greatest among you who is willing to be the servant of you all. "Two sparrows are sold for a farthing," is his simple expression of faith, "and not one of them falls to the ground without your Father. Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows." When he sent out his disciples to preach, he said, Be of good cheer, and be never afraid; and when you shall be called before the judges, this you shall find, that "it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall say; for it is not ye who speak, but your Father that speaketh in you."\*

Jesus said, "All that the Father hath is mine." Seems this an awful and divine claim on his part? Think you that only a special kind of being could say such a thing? Nay, I would say it myself, following humbly yet bravely the Master. I know not whether I should say these words in the sense of the Evangelist. It is not possible to tell. The words were spoken long ago, and written down under different scenes. Perhaps, as one interpreter thinks, the saying means that Jesus had omnipotence on his side, and that God in time would establish his place and power. More likely the words, as they stand in the fourth Evangelist, mean the possession by Jesus of the counsels of God, his sharing of the divine counsels, by virtue of being the Divine Word,—as Paul says, "In whom dwelt the fullness of God bodily." But if either of these was the sense in the

\*Mt. x, 19.

mind of the fourth Evangelist as he wrote the words, the question still is, What meant Jesus by them?—if he spoke them, as well we may believe he did. For my own part, I think they may have had to the mind of the Master, with his great soul, searching wit and large intelligence, a meaning more vast than even the disciple understood. The Evangelist interpreted the saying in agreement with his own special theory of Jesus, a view which neither of the other gospels partake. But Jesus was above all thoughts of kingdoms or powers. No; the saying is like his other words, “A greater than the Temple is here.” Why may not his pure spirit have soared to the height of the thought of the religiousness of all things? Nay, shall I say why not? I think he did. His recorded life holds proofs that he held this idea and lived in the light of it, as in the sun. Therefore, I think that all the things of the Father seemed to him to be his things, because he knew that naught was uncared for nor unclean, nor could slip away out of the eternal counsels, that all things reflected the Infinite wisdom and love, and that all things belonged to the children of God to use and enjoy in their measure, all things, all thoughts, the mind, soul, body, reason, life, activity, imagination, sense. Truly it would seem the Master must have meant all this, although the words come to us through the mind of the fourth Evangelist, who certainly has much altered in meaning what he gives as from Jesus. But this, at any rate, is the comprehensive righteous rejoicing sense which I find in the words; whereby anyone may use them and find life and joy in them. They mean the religiousness of all things. They say, “What God hath cleansed, call not thou unclean,” but rise up, possess and use it, for it is thine to use as thou art his, but to use also as his, and to take it therefore in holy fear. These words embody a divine peace, which broods over all things as the Spirit over chaos, bringing forth faith, light and joy. All is harmony and peace. Part is not made by God and part by some evil being, but He rules all things “with the glory of a Father.” This did the intelligence of Jesus see and know. All things were his; nothing was too sacred; nothing was too little to be sacred, nor aught too great to be opened to him; naught was profane; there was no forbidden tree of knowledge. If, as the same fourth Evangelist records, Jesus



said, "I and my Father are one," it was in this same sense, sublime, awful, devout, humble. A perfectly pure soul may have this courage toward God, for this is what the æons of the earth's gestation have brought to pass in the soul, as a little child toward his father, unafraid, though also standing in reverence and awe. To Jesus, yea, to the human soul,

"All mine is thine, the sky-soul saith;  
The wealth I am must thou become;  
Richer and richer, breath by breath,—  
Immortal gain, immortal room."

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I have said that I take the image of the Master simply as he is set forth in the gospels, not undertaking any criticism of the records, but trying simply to declare the character therein shown. No doubt many misunderstandings gathered around that great life. The disciples I think never were masters of their own prejudices, never able to judge him and see him in sublime stature, as he was, either morally or intellectually. Still, in the main, a man was there who was like the portrait given of him, and his character is the only explanation of the amazing picture set forth in these wonderful, while yet untutored writings. Still less need I any criticism of the records in turning now to speak of the tenderness of Jesus, the qualities of his heart. These shine with a soft and lovely light. I have only to bring forward the touches of feeling and delicate shades of tenderness, of compassion, of devotion, of great love, which fill the gospels.

Jesus had friends. This is to be noted first, as running all through the gospel picture of him, bringing to sight the qualities of his heart. It may be said of him that he was attractive. He had the power of drawing people unto him. An invaluable gift, not always possessed perhaps by those worthy of it in virtue of noble qualities. And yet when that attractive force exists not, must it not be because of some defect, some human lack?

In the character of Jesus there was a certain fullness which drew men wonderfully. We read in the records that "the common people heard him gladly." When rejected in high places, in courts, palaces, synagogues, eagerly he was sought after by the people, who always were forming throngs about him as he stood at the roadside or on vineyard terraces, or when getting into the boat he spoke to the people a little way off, so that he might not be pressed on. And they "heard him gladly," feeling the kinship of the spirit that was in him, the good message that he had; yet, I think, drawn most and most touched by the wondrous deep fountain of tenderness in him. Constantly he was sought, and invited to houses, to repasts, to feasts, to social parties. Often when he had spoken to the company in the open air, some one, pressing forward, sometime the proud, the titled, the rich, just as often the poor, the outcast, the diseased, the Publican or sinner, begged Jesus to go home and eat in his house, that he might talk more with the great and gracious wayside rabbi. Women loved and trusted him equally with men, which I count a great virtue, or sign of virtue, in him, showing not only a nobility of soul, but also a pure tenderness of heart. I like that term which the Arabs have for high-minded men, "A brother of girls,"—a man, they say, "who has a heart pure to love all women, and an arm strong to defend them."

Jesus had also his special friends. He that so drew people about him to listen to his word, and expand under the charm of his influence, knew how to give his heart with special tenderness to those who could draw near to him by peculiar delicacy of kindredness. Among the chosen twelve he had one, a beloved disciple, who lay near him always when they reclined at meat together, rested in his bosom, received his most cherished counsels, and gave and took constant tenderness of personal communion. Jesus was a very dear friend in the house of the humble family at Bethany, whither he used to go often, to converse with them, to be their guest, to cheer them, and I doubt not to be cheered, as often he needed in his very lonely ministry. When Lazarus died, we are told that coming to them and seeing the grief of the sisters and friends, "Jesus wept." Thackeray has said that a man is most a man when some persons call him un-

manned; so was the tender heart of Jesus then. It will not be strange doctrine to you, in me, whatever it may be in others, that I accept not the actual raising of Lazarus from the dead. I look on that story as one of the mythical elements in the gospels which a great reverence for the character of Jesus called into being after he had passed away. How could the strong, calm intelligence of Jesus have wept for a passing sorrow which so soon he was to change, yea, even at that moment, into renewed and startled joy? I prefer the simple record that he wept. For all the miracles which the gospels hold, I would not give up one drop of those tears, or make them unbecoming the facts. Besides love for the family, Jesus seems to have had a very tender friendship with Mary, the sister of Lazarus. There have been students of the life of the Master who have thought that his love for her was of a very special, close and delicate kind, that indeed she was more to him than belongs to usual friendship or sisterhood; of which the record wholly is silent. But we know that Mary loved to sit at his feet with simple humility listening to his talk, adding thereto, we may believe, not a little; for out of her answering love often the eloquence of devout silence, but also sometimes the eloquence of self-forgetting speech, must have come. Always this has seemed to me a beautiful touch in the life of Jesus, given us in this slight story of the family at Bethany, whither continually he was going, where, no doubt, in his lonely and uncheered ministry, very healing and gracious was the welcome and love. And tenderly he returned it.

We may gather hints of the tenderness of his spirit from the nature of the miracles. I have counted (making allowance for some critical views which aver some two or three stories to be different accounts of the same facts) thirty-six miracles. Of these, twenty-four were healing acts; and besides these, we read continually of the very many healings which never were recorded in detail; for wherever he went they brought the sick to him. We read, many times how they thronged to him, by the seaside, the lakeside, in the city, in the houses where he was, that he might lay his hands on them simply, and bless, cheer, strengthen, or even heal them by the medicinally health of his soul. Thus he seems to have gone about doing good to the suffering, always ready to give heed to human ailments.

Jesus was also a loving friend of children; which I count no little in the record of his tenderness. Wherever he went they seem to have trooped to him, running into his arms. We may gather more from two or three touches in the record than they give literally or completely. The mothers loved to come with their children, being at home in that gracious and gentle presence; and he laid his hands on the children's heads (according to the custom of the rabbins, a lovely custom, as I have seen it in a synagogue of the ancient ritual of the Jews wherein still is preserved the lovely old traditions) and blessed them, giving them some little loving word of benediction; after which the mother, rejoicing, would carry the child away, feeling that holy hands had laid some special gift of consecration or of safeguard on the infant's head.

Jesus' tenderness flowed out to all the people everywhere. I think he seldom looked on human beings, either separately or when many were gathered together, without a sense of awe and wonder, and a yearning at his heart toward them. It is recorded that once, looking on the multitude who came to hear him preach and expound, his heart was moved, and he yearned toward them because they seemed to him as sheep without a shepherd, longing to be taught and lo! none present to preserve them, and in danger of being scattered abroad.\* He was the "good Shepherd;" not "a hireling," but the Shepherd "whose own the sheep are;" and the good Shepherd "giveth his life for the sheep.†"

Jesus was very sensible of the beauty of humility, and of that humble fidelity which out of sight or in shadow does its simple task, neither asking praise nor bemoaning a lone lot. Once when he stood beside the Treasury, as the records have it, which means the place where the chests were into which the Jews were used to cast tribute for the Temple service, he saw a poor woman approach who was a widow; and she dropped in two of the very smallest coins of the realm, all but worthless, so little was their value, two mites says the record. Whereupon Jesus called his disciples specially to him, we read, and bade them take notice of the poor woman, and see how the gold was showering in from the many who passed by and made their

\*Mt. ix., 36.

†Jh. x.

tribute to the Temple,—thinking, no doubt, many of them, that the more they gave, the greater the merit. But Jesus said, I tell you that this poor woman who out of her necessity hath wrung this little tribute, for love, hath paid more than they all. He always believed so supremely in the value of the tender feelings, the purpose, the love, the heart in any act, that never he counted anything costly which was a means of spending the heart-treasure which so much more was costly. So that when once he was at table in a house, reclining at the meal, and a poor woman came and broke over his head an alabaster box of precious ointment, and his very disciples grumbled thereat, thinking it a waste because the ointment might have been sold for much money to be given to the poor, Jesus rebuked them. It was the outpouring of her heart, he said,—more costly than any spikenard. The record has it that Jesus added, “In that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.”\* But however these words may have been added after the end came, as very like they were, since we know that events threw back their long shadows into the gospel records, still the answer shows how tenderly, how delicately Jesus took the offering, counting nothing waste that so outpoured the soul. A like-scene, by some expounders thought to be a different version of the same, occurred in a Pharisee’s house; where being at meat, a weeping woman, who had many faults and sins to answer for, the record says, came, touched deeply, perhaps having seen him elsewhere, full of that gentle presence, drawn irresistibly, and weeping for her own ills of soul, broke a like precious vase of ointment over his feet, washed them with her plentiful tears, and then with her long and woe-disheveled hair, wiped away the drops as if she meant not thus to wash the Master’s feet with the brine of her repentance. What said the Pharisee? Only that if Jesus had been a prophet, he would have known what manner of woman she was who thus was offering him the incense of her love and the worship of her penitence. Yea, truly; and being a prophet he did know, and being a prophet of God he despised not, but accepted. With his great tenderness and love he pierced to the pure sorrow of the soul which then was in his presence, whatever may have been the strife or sin of the times that were gone.†

\*Mt. xxvi. †Lc. vii.



These touches in the record show us how gentle, how human, how tender, how personally loving, was the soul of the Master. We are not surprised to read that the love which always was a wayside offering to those whom he met, burned like a holy light at the end, covering the cross with glory. As the last hours drew on we read of that tender lament over Jerusalem. Approaching the city, he halted for a little time on the hill, and looked out over that lovely view. He saw the ancient city of the Kings reposing in its beauty and glory, with its shining roofs and pinnacles, its streets ringing with business, its Temple full of incense and imposing worship. Mayhap he looked forward more than back. Perched on that little eminence, he sat on a high place of prophetic sight, of that far-seeing which is given to the holy and the true. He may have seen in spirit then the overthrow, the destruction, and interpreted the signs of the times to know how the eagles were gathering and leaving the nest to come swooping down on that lovely array of palaces. He cried in the tenderness of his spirit, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold! your house is left unto you desolate!"\* When through those same streets he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and women who had learned to love him in many lessons, in many interviews and places where they could feel the influence of that spiritual presence, pressed around him weeping, many of whom he knew no doubt, perhaps all those of the name Mary, mayhap even the one who "stood the cross beside," and that tender friend from Bethany, he turned and said unto them, "Daughters of Jerusalem,"—as if still thinking of the city of his love and pride,—“Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”† On the bitter cross all enmity cleared away, if ever he had felt any. Having come to a clear knowledge of the thing that was set for him to do, which mayhap he had struggled over in those hours in Gethsemane, not seeing clearly at first, then on that exaltation (as thenceforth it became to all the centuries, though up to that moment but a common Roman gallows), he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."‡

\*Mt. xxiii. 37. †Lc. xxiii. 28. ‡Lc. xxiii. 34.

All through his life, which thus ended in one burst and glow of forgiving love, Jesus was a lover of the outcast, of the sinful, of the poor. I do believe he never knew what it was to shrink from a human being because the man was a sinner, or because others shrank from him, or because he was an outcast or an alien. Sometimes cunning persons came laying traps for him, to see how he would treat just such people, even those that were held most in horror or disdain. There is such a story in the first eleven verses of the famous eighth chapter of the Fourth Gospel. Now I must remind you that these verses form no proper part of the New Testament considered as a collection of writings. They have no rightful place in the text. They are omitted now by all worthy critical editors of whatever doctrinal view. They are absent from four out of the five great manuscripts, and from others of high authority. Many manuscripts which contain the passage, mark it as suspicious. It is found also in different parts of the gospels, as at the end of the fourth gospel and after the twenty-first chapter of Luke. Also, it is full of notable differences of texts (various readings). Some ancient notes mention the omission of the passage from many manuscripts. Finally, it is wholly unmentioned by many church Fathers of the highest antiquity and authority. Therefore, there is no doubt the passage is ungentine. Probably it was added to the text in the third or fourth century. Well, what of all that? Still it seems to me a scrap of true tradition, a precious bit of the history of the Master. It well accords with his character as elsewhere shown. It is consonant with his merciful justice and with his tender sympathy for shame. Probably it is, I say, a scrap of tradition written down at a late time (for none of the Evangelists seized on it), introduced by some copyist perhaps, who thus preserved for us an incident in the life of the Master which in some way escaped the stream of transmission that fed the gospels. And what an incident it is! A touch of unparalleled beauty, of moral sublimity! Evidence not only of a tender heart, but of the swift and incisive intelligence of Jesus of which I have spoken. For always he knew and spoke the right word at the moment, saying just what cleaved its way to the soul, seized on the heart and wrung it. Open your eyes on the picture. Here is the crouching and shamed woman; Jesus is

near, kindly tender, his thoughts fixed first on the shrinking form before him, wandering from her mayhap to the repentant woman who had loved much, to whom much it is said therefore was forgiven. Perhaps he was able beyond what we can conceive to pierce the soul of that trembling human creature and see it pure and virgin at the core, and thence follow outward the lines of the pitiful face until they led to sore and sad experiences legible there to his eye. On the other side, the Pharisees, cunning, pitiless, dragging the poor victim to open misery; not for justice, no, but that they might trap the new prophet into some departure from Moses' Law, and thus wreak on him their hatred and anger. Well, they found no weakness, no paltering, no fear of them; no, nor of their law, nor of evil report. He was as a throned judge. He knew where the real wickedness lay at that instant in that company, and whose hearts were black. The crowd heard with consternation that lofty answer, whose memorable power equally shielded the innocent and defeated the plotters,—“Yes, yes, I know Moses' Law; she shall be stoned; let her be stoned; begin now, and let him that is without sin among you throw the first stone.” Straightway eminence in shame made its way from the shrinking woman to the sneering crowd. They hung their heads and slunk away. Then said Jesus to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Are they all gone? Has no one passed sentence on you?” She answered, “No one, Sir;” and Jesus said, “Neither do I sentence you. Go, and sin no more.”

“To Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love,  
All pray in their distress.  
And to these virtues of delight  
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love,  
Is God our Father dear,  
And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love,  
Is man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart;  
Pity, a human face;  
And Love, the human form divine;  
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man of every clime  
That prays in his distress,  
Prays to the human form divine,  
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form  
In every race and zone;  
Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell,  
There God hath built his throne.”\*

Who will be surprised that a soul of so far-reaching tenderness led a life of much sadness and loneliness? For not only was he so quick and so tender in feeling, but this heart of his was united to prophetic intelligence, so far stretching ahead that few could understand, few keep up with that spiritual pace, and he went lonely all his life. Truly “he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister,” comforted but little, I must think, even by the greatest and best near him. He said of himself, that he had not even what the foxes had, and the birds of the air, a place where to lay his head,—a place, we might say, where to lay his head on a human heart. “He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” At last he came to that scene in the Garden, a wondrous story of his tenderness and feeling, where I suppose there came rushing on his soul the memories of “the acceptable year of the Lord,” in the five little villages around the Lake of Galilee, where “the common people heard him gladly,” where he preached from Sabbath to Sabbath, and often on other days by the wayside as he walked, a wandering Rabbi. He wondered, I think, whether he needs must drink the cup, whether he might not go back to those lowly scenes, live in calmness and quiet, and teach his message and fling it on the air to go as it might, and walk in peace. That must have been the Garden struggle, I think. In those solitary wrestlings, in those lone prayers, he learned that the cup was held to him by One who had the right to hold it, whose he was, and he knew that to go back to peace and simple daily joy would make him a runaway from God. So there he stayed, and fought the agony of the struggle; for he had a clear prevision of what awaited him now in a few short hours. He came back and found his few chosen friends unable to watch out his short prayer-time, heavy with sleep. He roused them once, but

\*William Blake.

afterward when still they were overcome, he said to them gently, "Ah well! it matters little; the end is very near; you will have need of all your strength; sleep on, and take your rest."

Think often, I pray you, and ponder well how strange it is that we must be fed by holy sufferings. Truly man is great; but what wonder? Think of the food he is fed on! If the mind thrive on noble and delicate viands, as the body does, it is no wonder there is so much joy, so many glad, so many good; for truly the mind of mankind feeds on the sorrows and sufferings of ages past, and on this meat has grown so great. Strange, and to me a moving sight, that thus the world is happy and glorious by the pain of the best of the world. One of the old saints exclaims, "If truth live, I live; if justice live, I live; and these by any one's sufferings are enlarged and enthroned." It is always so. The seed is not quickened unless it die. Some precious fruit must be torn to pieces by the earth's chemical fingers, if a noble tree is to grow. Instantly starts up before the mind the train of the greatest and best, whose lives thus were laid in the earth in sorrow to be quickened and raised in beauty for far ages to feed on. Socrates, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and many faithful humbler teachers, how they wandered and taught, scorned, exiled, set on, slain! "The noble army of martyrs" for church, science, country, liberty,—it is by their ashes, never cooled, that we are warmed. We sit down before them many times not thinking what is burning in those embers! The sorrowful biography of one will answer for all—the biography of this holy man of Nazareth. "What pleasure did he taste," as saith an old writer on his life, "what inclination, what appetite, what sense did he gratify? How did he feast or revel? How but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer, and retiring for devotion upon the cold mountains? What sports had he? What recreations did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep? \* \* \* What music did he hear? What but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy and furious accusations against him? To be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked, to be styled a King and treated as a slave, to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross,



these were the delights which our Lord enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life and the notable prosperities of his fortune. Such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it or fainting under it."\*

Seems it strange that if we dance it must be on loving dust and heroic graves—if we set up a high staff on which to spread a flag it must be sunk deep in mould where saints sleep—if we make merry and hold a festival of joy, it is to celebrate some great suffering? But how close pain and pleasure lie in this world, as said Socrates when the manacles were taken from his legs in his prison; for we cannot have one but it has a mate in some form of the other, which must be entertained also. Certain joys involve certain sorrows by necessity. As in the great world it has seemed needful hitherto that some shall agonize for the joy of many, so in our little spheres we cannot have an unmixed delight. But this truth is an atmosphere into which I lift my head with a sense of life in the air, and oriental power, as kine snuff the morning breeze. I see it is the highest joys which lie close to pain, the purest sorrows which run like tributaries into a sea of bliss. What serious joy when parted lovers come once more together! Yes, but not to be had without the parting? Thanks are fervent and great the joy when a son is born into the world, but therewith begin anxieties so stinging and solitudes so endless, that no one can look on a child with a quiet mind, and parental privilege is "pleasing pain." What need indeed, thus to state kinds of joy which carry pains in their girdles? It may be said that by a strange reaction joy and sorrow always attend closely on each other. When we have passed some gay and sparkling hours, and the time has flown, friends departed, the quiet come, the lights are out, the wit and song silent, suddenly we feel a sadness creep over us, a shadow descends on us, a dear sorrowful memory obtrudes, an unacknowledged foreboding arises, and we feel dimly how pathetic pleasure is, frisking like a lamb under the infinite sky which holds the solemn secret of to-morrow. But when we have considered duly that pain and pleasure are sisters going "coupled

\*Isaac Barrow.

and inseparable," and have given due weight also to the fact that it is the best and noblest spirits that always will suffer most of "fruitful sorrow," still it seems strange that we must build our holiest joyfulness on the agonies of a saint. There is something in it hard to understand, a dim, dark order of God. Yet so it has been always. Trace up the sanctities, the securities, the laws, the social rights which invest us with our dearest bliss or power,—we shall come at last to where a prophet was slain for those things or a bevy of obscure heroes offered up their bodies in fire for them. Why cannot we be joyful all together, ceasing all proscription, anger, persecution, in this world? Must it be always as it has been? Must we go on crucifying the elder sons of the human family? Surely it will be wise and well in us to see to it that if indeed pain lie so close to pleasure in this world by a deep law of nature, on the other hand pleasure shall lie close to pain by our own good efforts. Joy and sorrow indeed may be inseparable by nature, but I think it is left with us to choose whether the one or the other shall prevail the more. If we were but faithful to our small martyrdoms in our lot day by day, there were no need then of the sacrifice of the greatest and best. Think what would follow if only all the world were simply *patient* for a generation; if there were no hatred, no hasty or envious or unfair judgments, no slanders, no ferocious passions; if all fever to get the better of others, to grow suddenly rich, to get something for nothing, were to cease; if every one (as so many obscure heroes do) took up faithfully and simply his own burdens, "revering his cross," lifting whatever load lay in his way, bearing it on with patience and virtue, keeping up a simple cheer in his face with some eye-light to spare for others; if all the world, I say, were thus faithful to the daily burdens, one kind here, another there, if all thus were to suffer generously and humanely each in his lot in the divine order, think what a society would arise! What a gentle human nature! Then when the saint should come, guilty of no crime but loving his fellow-men and speaking the truth in simplicity, men would have a spirit capable of listening and thinking. They would not gather in mad mobs, crying, "Crucify him! crucify him!" It is a serious thought for us that if we learn not to bear patiently and dutifully the small crosses, yea, or the heavy crosses, of our daily

lives, truly we know not how far our failure may stretch. We help keep the world in that spirit which crucified Jesus and burned the saints, and will set loose yet other martyrs to heaven on like wings of pain; yea, and daily crucifies unwitnessed and unfamed faithfulness.

Here ends my discourse of Jesus. I have tried to speak to you of the prophetic glory of that grand true soul, his courage, his devotion. Also then of his intellectual strength, his broad mind, his wide sight, his incisive wit. These I ascribe much to his holiness, which always is a fountain of intellectual power. Finally I have spoken of the tenderness of heart of the prophet of Nazareth. This too, let me say in a word, was a source of his strength of mind and great knowledge. They who feel shall be they who know. Tender lovers are true seers. It is the tender and not the passionate lover, the tender heart that reaches out with vast pity and enfolding love, with a great awe of all human presence, and with a joy of kindredness,—they it is who shall know the issues of human life, and bathe in the deeps of its questions, fears, hopes, joys, sorrows. An old poet says,

“How wisely nature did decree  
With the same eye to weep and see.”



## SACRIFICE.

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I will take for my text that saying of Paul's which I have read you, "I beseech you, therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God,"—that is, on account of the mercies of God, which are reason for all service and offering and devotion,—“that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,”—that is, that we so conduct our lives and so use the body with which the spirit has been furnished, that thereby we shall offer it day by day, not a sacrifice in process of which the sacrifice is dead or dying, as in the ordinary sacrifice of the Temple, but a living sacrifice,—“holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,”\*—that is, a rational worship for you, the word translated service here meaning worship. I will add to this, from which I wish to speak of the nature and duty of sacrifice, another text, drawn from a story in the life of Jesus, in the fourth chapter of Matthew, “Angels came and ministered unto him.”

This was the reward of temptation resisted. The essence of the temptation was the seduction of ease, power and influence. These were resisted in favor of a life of self-sacrifice. Such plainly to the conscience of Jesus was the way by which he must work. He must give up many things for the one great object of bearing his testimony, of speaking his own soul's word, and doing his own special ministry of good to his fellow-men. Then came the reward. The choice being made, angels came and ministered to him.

This sacrifice of which Paul speaks, which Jesus made with the result of the ministry of angels to him, is of two kinds. First, a sacrifice when we give one thing for the sake of having another. It may be that we value both things, the one we give

\*Rom. xii, 1.



up, and the one we gain thereby. It may be that we value one and not the other; and surely we shall value one much more than the other, if we give up one for the other. In this kind of sacrifice, the two things, the one given up and the other one which is attained by the sacrifice, lie on the same plane. But secondly, there is another kind of sacrifice, namely, that in which we sacrifice ourselves, and this action also is of two kinds: when we sacrifice some lower gratification for higher ends, the lower gratification calling to us and pulling on us with great stress at the time, and being very near at hand, the higher end being far off and more spiritual, more beautiful it is true, but only when the eye is set very earnestly to behold it; again by another kind of sacrificing, when something of our own or pertaining to ourselves, is given up for the good and joy of others.

Now, sacrifice, of whatever kind, carries its reward with it, and each carries just the kind of reward that pertains to it. Whenever sacrifice is made, we have the gain which belongs to that kind of sacrifice. If it be a sacrifice of one object for another, then we have the object for which we gave up something else. But whenever a noble self-sacrifice is made for high ends, for unselfish devotion to a great and good thing, or for others' benefit, then there is the added reward, and sometimes it seems the only reward, of angel ministration. In plain prose,—if that be liked better,—then come a sweet peace and joy into the mind, and then arise also wonderful helps about us, and aid gathers marvelously about our feet, because all things do work together for good to those who yield obedience, pouring out themselves to help the world. We just have passed through the season of Lent, ending with the beautiful festival of the Easter on last Sunday. During this season many churches, and the practice of many persons, make a kind of sacrament of sacrifice founded on the story of the forty days of Jesus' fast in the wilderness. It is to be feared that this is a form which ends very often in formality, for that by many people the thought of sacrifice is brought no nearer, and no better understood, and indeed no real sacrifice made, for all the Lenten prayers and observations. But there is much to be said of sacrifice, and especially of that kind and character of it which is self-denial

for the wide world's sake. This I will take for my morning subject.

Sacrifice as a philosophy is very simple. It is nothing more than a statement of our limitations,—simply this, that we are finite, and not infinite. The principle is, that “as we cannot have everything, we must give up some things for the sake of having others.” Now, as we cannot escape the necessity of sacrifice, as it is certain indeed that we must give up some things for the sake of having others, because we cannot have all, it is plain that this becomes a test and measure of our mode and kind of living. For first, we are measured by the kind of things we choose. We may choose the mean things, the paltry, the showy, the gratifications which have none of the joys of mind, unworthy of the devotion of a thinking creature, ease, indulgence, luxury, cheap influence with our fellows,—one of the things most often chosen, to the sacrifice of all great, glorious, enduring helpfulness,—amusements, ornaments, the trifling things by the wayside of life. But such choice is not the sign of a noble spirit ruling in the breast. It is an attempt to shine by tinsel and rule by pretence. The true dignity of a man is not to think of winning respect, of admiration, of making show, nay, not even before his own friends, nay, I would say least of all before them, because to those nearest his heart he should be most solicitous to be simply himself. But a man's true dignity is to set his choice so high that perforce he must leave the lower things if he will follow that choice. This is the one great value of making the right choice, to set one's ideal so high that there is no other way of following it but by leaving lower things. I have known a man some circumstances in whose life embittered his heart very much, so that he brooded sadly on the wrongs that had been done him. But finally he said,—I see that if I go on growing bitter in this way, it is death. Now, how shall I escape these thoughts? I see no way but by filling my mind with other thoughts. Therefore whenever I walk forth, I must have some object of thought, something I am solving, something I am composing or some good things preparing, that by dwelling on them my mind may be kept too high for these bitter broodings. By such means a man chooses the grace belonging to those powers of mind and heart which mark him as

human, the virtue and beauty of generosity, of broad and growing intelligence, of stores of knowledge, of springs of thought, of mindfulness of the poor, the sad, the needy; and afterward, when he hath followed this mindfulness, as he will if it work in his heart, being keen, then memories of the hungry fed, of outcasts rescued, the forsaken cheered, the fallen lifted, humane causes watched and aided with his labor and with his substance.

But again, we are measured or tested not only by the nature of the things we choose, but by the energy of our choice of them; that is, by the amount or value of other things which we are willing to give up for the things we choose. I know no means of measuring the force and power of choice but this question—What is the value of the things which we will give for the chosen thing? It is true dignity, having made a choice, to make it with energy, in a noble way, understanding that it is a choice, whereby some other things must be given up for the things chosen. There is a kind of eagerness, greediness, much to be seen in life, wherewith filled a man thinks he can have all things, the high and the low together, giving up no thing for any other. But this is delusion. It weakens us. Being first born of our weakness, it weakens us the more. We must know what we do, and make the sacrifice cheerfully, heartily, loyally, not complaining of the alternatives, but seeing in the beginning all that a noble choice involves, and then going on with a bright face and beauty of contentment. I know of naught more contemptible than making a good choice, yet day by day whimpering at the price of it. We should choose nobly, as the poet clung to his song, which he loved and did cling to, though he said it “found him poor at first, and kept him so.”

The reason why men see no more clearly that they must face a choice with its consequences, is that they bring not clearly into thought the philosophy of sacrifice. They reflect but little. First they follow circumstances, without striving to turn circumstances as much as may be to a noble choice made in the region of thought, which is free of circumstances. Afterward they think they can have all the pleasant things without choosing firmly and decidedly the best things. These errors make them the sport of events, or the victims of the lower objects of life, because these lower objects always seem to cost the least. For

it is a strange and momentous truth, that sacrifices of the higher self, of the glories of the thinking part, the experiences of the heart, the raptures of the soul, sacrifices which at last leave us, if we do make them, wretched and wrecked, mere stranded hulks on life's pleasant lea,—these, I say, seem not in the beginning painful sacrifices, more often only postponements. How many men have said in the beginning of their career, “I cannot afford now to be generous. First I will earn much money, then I will be generous.” But ah! the poor philosophy; the little understanding; the postponement, which is destruction! When they have gotten the much money, they have lost equally the wish and the power to be generous. So it is with these puttings off, these thrustings away into the future of the good that appeals to us now, while we go after other things, and never return to that parting of the ways—for oh! we never come the same way twice,—where the choice was made so gaily, so thoughtlessly, so sadly.

But I must say that not every giving up of one thing for another, that is not every payment, is entitled to be called sacrifice, in the high, particular and glorious meaning of that word. The payment of the price of anything is entitled to be called a sacrifice only when it diminishes our privileges or our comforts. Notice that, I pray you,—payment is sacrifice only when it diminishes our privileges or our comforts. Very many persons think they have excellent reason why they should give naught in aid of any noble work which cries to be done, if they can say that they cannot do so without making their comforts and privileges less; which merely is saying that in this life they know no duty of sacrifice. This thought of sacrifice brings forth the question, What ought we to live for? Yea, it brings home the duty of every one to ask that question of himself. This I have said to you many times, and so many times that I fear me you will grow weary of me in this advice; but I know naught deeper in life than the need, if we would live well, to ask ourselves that question. Yea, I would say that every morning it were well, if with the spring of the body into a new day; we awoke the soul with this thought, saying, Come, soul, gird thee! Look forth into the coming hours! Reason of thyself! Say what we ought to live for this day.

Says William Law, in his "Serious Call," "I cannot see why every gentleman, merchant or soldier, should not put these questions seriously to himself: What is the best thing for me to intend and drive at in all my actions? How shall I do to make the most of human life? What ways shall I wish that I had taken when I am leaving the world? Now to be thus wise and to make thus much use of our reason, seems to be but a small and necessary piece of wisdom. For how can we pretend to sense and judgment if we dare not seriously consider, and answer, and govern our lives by that which such questions require of us? \* \* \* \* But if people will live in so much ignorance as never to put these questions to themselves, but push on a blind life at all chances, in quest of they they know not what nor why, without ever considering the worth or value or tendency of their actions, without considering what God, reason, eternity and their own happiness require of them, it is for the honor of devotion that none can neglect it but those who are thus inconsiderate, who dare not inquire after that which is the best and most worthy of their choice."

I have been told of an incident in the life of a minister, before he took on him what should be so holy an office,—and yet not holier than any office which each one may hold to in any daily walk; for all is holy. When a young man he was fond of sports and social pleasures. Without thought of the matter, he was falling gradually into reckless and unworthy habits. But one evening, while waiting for a companion in the public room of a tavern, he began to read from a book which happened to lie on the table, and he came to this sentence: "In morals there is no standing still; either you are growing better, or growing worse." He lay down the book; for the first time mayhap in his life, he asked himself the questions what he *ought* to live for, and what he *was* living for. Was he growing better? Plainly, not. Was he growing worse, then? The question stopped him, rising before him. He stood still. On the wall of that question his course of life appeared, like a hand of flame writing. There was a moral awakening in him, which made him a new man, and one of great earnestness, conscientiousness, and helpfulness to others. Such things prove that if we ask ourselves the question, What ought we to live for?—we are also



putting ourselves in marching order, to go forth beyond ourselves, mold the choices and help the lives of others. By divine laws we are our brothers' keepers, in ways and degrees we dream not of. If the choice which must be taken by us, be a thing so momentous, surely it is a solemn thought that we must affect the choice for others by our own choice for ourselves. Every day we are a portion of the circumstances which move some one's choice of a better or a worse life. We are preparing to affect the choice of some soul which surely is coming, coming in the distance, coming on with the very certainty of God, straight to us to receive our affect, as surely as the earth goes its way by gravitation. Ay, sure it is that we, even we, shall stand some time at the parting of the road for some person, when we know it not, and turn him in the way which he will follow thereafter,—who knows how long, or whither? Wherefore, as I have said, it were well if every morning we asked ourselves what we ought to live for this day. That were indeed an unclosing of the eye of the soul, fit to go with the opening of the body's eye into the new creation which springs for us every dawn. If we were to ask ourselves that question, consider—would not life begin to take on a dignity, grace, elevation, especially a glory of sacrifice and of self-sacrifice which would be regeneration indeed?

Sacrifice, the kind of it, the nature of it, is what *sets the tone of a house and home*. This is a good thing to remember, touching this counsel that very well in the morning we may ask ourselves what we ought to live for this day. Sacrifice it is which sets the tone of unselfishness in a house. Wherever all those that dwell together do resolve in the morning that they will think of others, and not of themselves, and will give up little wishes that others may enjoy the more, surely that must be a day of unselfishness, and many such days make the tone of the home unselfish. Secondly, by wise and noble choices, sacrifice sets the tone of the house; that is, by the things we sacrifice for other things. You will find that you may judge yourself and others by things emphasized. Find out what things you lay stress on; you will begin to get into your souls, and see of what stuff you are. Thus it is that sacrifice lies at the base of all noble home life,—first, by introducing therein the tone of unselfishness, without which

there is no bliss at home; secondly, by founding the household on the great things of life by means of the wise choices which sacrifice the small things to the great.

Sometimes it is needful to abridge not only our privileges, but our comforts. We have to make very grave choices sometimes. What should be the rule? This is the rule,—In sacrifices, choose whatever raises most the spiritual, the intellectual level, and let the pinching come on the lower wants. Apply this rule, and what a difference in our lives! What different furniture of our houses, our tables, our feast days, our pleasures! What sadness to see children whose tricky attire shows how far above the garments of the soul the mother has set their outward look. For life is too full to be rich in both raiments. You will find no woman able to be very careful about trimmings, shapes, cuttings, richness of stuffs, and at the same time gloriously intent on the souls of her children. When the mother keeps hands and feet so busy that she has no time for reading or for friendship, when the father toils in like manner, coming home too tired for gentle humors whether he would or not, too weary to sit him down to talk with his children or read to them from some good book, not bringing a sunny face, never stopping at the door when he is tired, with his hand pressing the handle before he opens it, to say, “Now, come up Soul, and make ready for this entrance; we go into a holy place; let it be with genial face and gentle feet,”—surely when the mother and the father make this mistake, it is a sad and fruitful evil in the house. To forego the earning of much money, is one of the greatest sacrifices that any man can make. Yet how can he escape the need of that sacrifice if he will enrich the soul of his child by contact with his own kept strong enough, unwearied enough, thoughtful enough, for that power? Oh yes, I know what the exactions of life are, and how hard in practical struggles to do this! But I ask you, Is it not to be kept before the mind as the ideal? Is it not too holy a claim to be lost, to be forgotten and overlooked in the dust of the day’s toils? Sure it is that we must make sacrifices, whether we will or not. We cannot creep into corners or caves from them. We must make choices. Look to it that we abridge our comforts or privileges, if need be, for the higher aims.

To live in a home where everything is had, where no privations are known, where nothing ever is given up, I am sure is a sad thing for character. In this way again sacrifice gives tone to the household and the home, and is indeed the main moral force that gives a noble tone to the house. Look on the nature of those who have been brought up with many privations, many sacrifices firmly met, and the nature and the reasons of them pointed out to the children, that they must give up one thing because without that sacrifice they cannot have another, and the other is the better, being the mental, the spiritual, the glorious, the beautiful! I think you shall find in such characters strength and beauty, and an eye open to the glorious meaning of life, as they grow old. I was told once by a woman in mid age that she could not remember, from her earliest experience, an unsatisfied want. I told her not my reflections, but I had made up my mind long before that she was a sad sink of selfishness. Perhaps she had unwittingly shown me the root of the distortion. I knew another person who always had had everything cleared from his way. One lover after another, he told me, had made it a care and business to clear every hard thing and every hindrance from his path. Ah! it was not plain that he had learned so much as to think of clearing away from the paths of others thereby, or had been nurtured to a humble tenderness of spirit. I care not what the riches of a family are, moral health requires they should deny themselves something, whereby to serve the world the more. If there be such riches in the household that the family can afford well to give what the world calls a generous share to the good causes which humanity now has in hand, still I say they should give more, until they have to pinch somewhere in that giving; for moral health is impossible if a man gives of his overplus only, and never feels that the giving has touched a comfort or even a pleasure.

Again, sacrifice is the only valid test of personal love. The only question in the heart's affections is,—How much will we sacrifice ourselves for the loved one? I can think of no other way to judge what your love is worth, and no other sign whereby to know whether it be that valid and true thing which deserves to be called human love, or that base pretence and mean metal which is only "passion to possess." If you are willing to

sacrifice but little, then be assured that you love yourself rather. And no one loves another much, who loves himself more.

But sacrifice has a peculiar reward in itself, which is worthy of much reflection. I mean what I may call the principle of reaction, a law by which angels come and minister to one who has made a noble choice. They come too in greater and greater troops as life goes on, wherein the choice is repeated or continued daily; for it is reiteration of noble choice that at last makes all the life noble and high. The sacrifice enriches in our eyes the object attained by it. First we make a sacrifice because we value the object, and then the sacrifice makes us value the object more. This law brings us swiftly back to what I have said of sacrifice, that it is a test of affection. We see how close this doctrine of sacrifice lies to the nature of the heart; for we shall find it is the same law with the law of the affections, namely, that we tend to love those whom we benefit. If we sacrifice anything for one, we shall find the tender emotions begin to bloom. Think what a great and beautiful fact of mind this is, what a wonderful reward. If we prize any great thing so much that we will bear loss and pain for it, that days and nights of toil seem not too great a price, that strength is freely given, and long watching, waiting, anxiety, hope, prayer, men's scorn or pity or anger, dared for it, and all this seems little to pay, so great is the object in our mind, one would think that such a valuation were enough, and that when the great object of so much pains and longing were attained, the reward already would be great enough. But to such sacrifice, angels come and minister in the shape of this law of mind, which pours, as from a crystal flagon, a yet dearer draught of congratulation. For what reward, what riches, gain, requital, can equal the rapture of finding suddenly the dear object grown dearer still, still lovelier and greater in our eyes than we dreamed, and worth more even than we were struggling to pay? Yet this is what happens to noble sacrifice. Heaven pours on it this last elixir of reward, that we find the object more precious even than we thought, that instantly it glows with such new beauty as makes the pains we pay for it only like breezes from the West where those hard days are setting, pouring aromas of new soils and wild flowers over the accomplishment of our toils. This is a law of mind on

which we may linger lovingly, and behold with a certain awe this increase of value of what was so precious before, the value greater now because we have poured out our hearts for it.

If what I have been saying be true, how can we expect anything to thrive nobly, especially any great moral cause, the increase of liberty, light and love in the world, or how can we think the fellowships formed for these objects will be strong and cheerful, unless these great things be loved so well that we will sacrifice for them? Let us ask now, each one himself, How much do we sacrifice? Take the question home to you. Let me for once,—for I am not given to it,—play the part of the old preachers, who always came to a close by making a very personal application of the sermon. Remembering my definition of sacrifice, that the payment of the price of anything is entitled to be called sacrifice in a high sense only when it diminishes our privileges or our comforts, let each one ask himself how much sacrifice he makes habitually for the great things of life and the great causes of the world. How many sacrifice any privilege, let me ask, any *privilege*, once a year? How many a comfort? How many deny themselves a strong desire, a great pleasure, how many have definitely something less than they want, or even than comfort dictates, and feel the pinch of it, *once each year*, in order to help the world along? How many who have few pleasures at best limit them by even a very little? And how many who are busy, important, influential in affairs, give themselves,—which is the greatest sacrifice, greater than all the rest beside, their time, personal thought,—this worth all their money ten times told,—their labor, their love, their strength, to religion and humane labors? I think if we ask this question earnestly, we shall find it is no wonder that these noble things thrive so little and are so long a-coming, and Paradise so far away. If we will sacrifice thus for great and good things, we shall love them the more. We shall receive the reward. We shall give up things for some noble object because of its truth and greatness in our eyes, wherein instantly we shall be rewarded by loving it the more in proportion to the things given up for it. It may be that this law is behind some of the strength that has carried a martyr into the fire. We shall bear causes at heart, if the heart has bled



for them. We shall lift them high by the strength of our arms.

We shall not fear to work then with a few, as lovers of all great and good things which are costly of heart, soul, time, must work at first. Yes,—we cannot see the end of the time when few will gather to a cause which demands sacrifice. But even if we be alone, what then? There are souls who dare to stand alone; like Jesus, “when Christianity was in a minority of one.” But no one will count the ranks who weighs the soul. “One with God is a majority.” A German poet says,

“How many times would Christ  
Still suffer willingly upon the cross,  
Only to save one sinner, the last man,  
The prodigal son, in body and in soul!  
Let none then even speak the name of Christ,  
Who will not try himself, too, so to live,  
And so to each surrender everything.”

## OLD AGE.

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“Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man.”—LEVITICUS XIX, 32.

The text is eloquent. It is placed immediately before duties of hospitality,—“And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God;”—as if we should regard the old man, being so near heaven, as a stranger with us, to be served with hospitality.

When Theodore Parker preached of old age, he asked “all old persons to forgive the imperfections” of his discourse, since he could not like them speak from experience. “Pardon me, venerable persons,” he exclaimed, “if I mistake! I read from only without; you can answer from within.” He said, however, that he thought he knew something about the character of venerable men and women: for he “was born into the arms of a father then two and fifty years old, who lived to add yet another quarter of a century thereto,” and his “cradle was rocked by a grandmother who had more than four score years at his birth, and nearly a hundred when she ceased to be mortal.” I, who need still more indulgence in undertaking my subject, am not able to lay claim to such qualifications; although my grandfather died at ninety-six years of age, sitting erect; and at five and seventy years, finding a Republican Irishman in trouble at the polls, he sheltered him with his own fists while the man dropped in his free ballot; and at four score and five he was fully alive and abreast of political thought. But my chief plea for indulgence is that I love the aged. No beauty is so wonderful and rich;

and if the old be wise, the wisdom is very deep. "To know how to grow old," says Amiel, "is the master-work of wisdom and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living."

It is a reason for study of the art of growing old and of the worth of the result of it, that we *must* grow old whether we do it well or ill. Other arts may be let alone by those who like not to learn them; but this one must be practiced by every one, with all the world to witness. Whether with grace or awkwardly, with glory or shame, still we must do it.

It is a reason, too, to study old age that it is pictured but darkly and has little joy in men's views of it. "If the question be," says Emerson, "the felicity of age, I fear the first popular judgments will be unfavorable. From the point of sensuous experience, seen from the streets and markets and the haunts of pleasure and gain, the estimate of age is low, melancholy, and sceptical. Frankly face the facts, and see the result. Tobacco, coffee, alcohol, hashish, prussic acid, strychnine, are weak dilutions: the surest poison is time. This cup, which Nature puts to our lips, has a wonderful virtue, surpassing that of any other draught. It opens the senses, adds power, fills us with exalted dreams, which we call hope, love, ambition, science; especially, it creates a craving for large draughts of itself. But they who take the larger draughts are drunk with it, lose their stature, strength, beauty, and senses, and end in folly and delirium."

"We must admit," says another voice, "that the darker coloring is that which prevails the most in ancient and modern writings. Nor is this strange, when we consider how the sadder portions of that failing time force themselves upon the notice and the sympathies of men, while its more cheerful features have, for the most part, to be sought out and appreciated by the higher sentiments of our nature. In the Old Testament, the bent and wasted forms of the heroes of its history are apt to make but melancholy pictures. There is Isaac with his dim eyes; and Jacob with his gloomy retrospections; and Barzillai, in the midst of his joyless riches that could not restore to him a single one of his former delights, at only fourscore years refusing to go up with his triumphant king to Jerusalem because he could not taste his delicacies nor hear the music of his sweet singers; and that king himself, the great bard and conquerer, brought down

to imbecility and the most pitiful dependence." Among moderns it is the same. Old age is "crabbed," "sans everything," "What can an old man do but die?" is the tone and teaching of the many poets and, I fear me, the general feeling of men.

For these reasons it is good to consider well of old age. And here at the threshold we come on one feature of it in which poet, artist, philosopher, have delighted, however they have taken little comfort in it otherwise. I mean the beauty of old age, its physical decorations; for there are as many beautiful old people as young people, and the adornments of age are made very conspicuous by Nature. Old age is the fruit of life. It has all the loveliness, when perfect, of the mature and completed product. It is a great mistake to suppose that the hale and hearty years of mid age are the fruit of this world's life, and old age the decay of the fruit. This is so no more than hot noon is the consummation of the day, and not rather the soft and elevating splendor of the sun-set; no more than the proud and spreading stem is the destiny of corn, and not rather the full and bountiful ear, a hundred acres condensed in the product of one.

Observe what wondrous chemistry, what mysterious physics bring to pass the maturity of this fruit of life. Even in outward nature, who can trace the ripening influences of atmosphere, earth, waters, and credit each with its due effect on form, color, and flavor? What a beautiful product is a perfect peach,—the fairest growth and best representative of the mingled serenity and sweetness of our favored temperate climate. Let it hang well ripened on its tree in a September sun, and what a perfect object it is!—its pink-white side, speckled with brown dots, shading into the rich blush of its sun-ward cheek, the whole softened and protected by a delicate garment of wool thought necessary in nature's careful nursery. The slightest puncture, like the faintest attack on a loving heart, reveals such juices as ancient Olympus never dreamed of. Each day of sun, each second of the sun's altitude, every summer cloud that drifted over it, every bird that shook the atmosphere around it or alighted a moment on the trembling twig, every film and feather of mist from the earth, every raw fog, the evening's coolness, the dew's bath, the rain from the south, the cold storm, the western breeze, every blast from the chill east or blustering north,—all these

have warmed, cooled, fanned, jostled, dried and moistened the peach into its perfect ripeness. But if these influences cannot be traced in the coarser realm of matter, if on the wings of the wind and down the rivers of rain come ten thousand workers to the waiting fruit, invisible, hurried by sails of web or urging on their "viewless steeds" with "whip of cricket-bone and lash of film," and whence they come, whither they go, or what freight of form, color or taste they bear, we cannot tell, how much less can we entrap the artizans that chisel the splendid countenance of noble age! I once heard a mathematician say that, as we think and perform all our acts *in time*, and as time is a matter of quantitative relations, the mathematician yet would have a formula for the poet and the philosopher. I know not. The triumphs of mathematics have a heavenly quality. Yet I will expect this mathematics of the soul, when first I have beheld the formulæ for a human *face*, where some of the forming elements are outward and material. All the elements that worked together to perfect the peach, have wrought also on the face of age. It is weather-beaten and weather-mellowed by many changing years. Meantime the soul works outward. The face of noble old age is the product of a world of inward experience, which beautifies the countenance by as much as it enriches the spirit. There is a curious argument which once was in some favor against the philosophy called Materialism, drawn from the phenomena of memory. If the soul were material, it was argued, memory could be only an entry of some nature on a tablet; and no matter how small the mark or notch by which such entry should be made, the number of our experiences finally would cover the tablet entirely with the marks or notches, so that no more could be added and we could remember no longer. I can not rest on this argument; for the human face in age refutes it. For on it is chronicled every wave of feeling. It is that veritable tablet of the soul. In it is lined and notched every passing emotion, albeit there is no microscopic sense to resume them in memory. In the aged face are the heavy curves of care, the furrows of toil, the brow spanned with thought, study and speculation; the lines that mark intelligence and generous ideas, evidence of a soul free and enlarged; the firm mouth of tempered will, the clear front of righteousness, the inimitable



marks of purity, the chastened lines of love, joy, anxiety, longing, watching, losing and sorrow; the deep print of a forgotten despair trenching on the record of rapture; the track of humility, the arches of faith and worship; and over all the golden beam of benevolence. Every experience, as it comes and goes, leaves some new treasure of expression. Such rare faces are seen sometimes. Whoever sees will acknowledge that no beauty is like to this, nor will wonder that often it engages the most loving labor of the artist. This beauty is garnered morality, the spiritual beauty of honesty become physical and visible. Old age is the engraving of the soul's habitude, long a-making and by many slight touches, but deeply cut at last. It has been said, finely, "Time has the same effect on the mind as on the face. The predominant passion, the strongest feature, becomes more conspicuous from the others retiring."

Here we enter the inner court of the subject of old age, the moral points of it, beauty of soul, freedom, honor. There is, indeed, one grace of character which finds in old age its only perfect instance; I mean *unselfishness*. This is not much to be expected in children. In youth it is but a duty whose observation confers not so much grace as its omission deforms. But what a lustre unselfishness adds to old age! How angelic and god-like does age appear when by long self-denial and discipline it has become very nature to give of itself. Then patient, loving age is seen holding in tender consideration the young and restless, forbearing in restraint, active in sympathy, anxious to hide its own weakness or soberness, thus to cast no shade on gaiety, quick to find excuses which never it found for its own errors in youth, never seeming to think that age should be served, but only that it should have learned better how to serve,—as I have seen in a crowded car an old man or old woman rise to give a seat to a tired young mother with a child in her arms, while young men sat still indifferent. All this, truly, is grand and noble, able to compel high strains or homely eloquence. What a visible immortality hath love! It is said well,—"Every one may have observed, who would, that the memory is the first of our better powers to yield to the pressure of age. The judgment is the last to give way. The affections resist it forever. The inference is obvious enough. We may attach too

sensitive an importance to the first of these. The last is the immortal sphere in which we are lovingly to dwell; and it is this that calls for our chief concern."

On the other hand, how repulsive is aged vice, of whatever kind. How fearful in appearance! What discord! What blackness against white! What contrasted degradation!—silver hair, like a cloud of purity, covering intemperate disease. There is one evil, one mean, damning vice, one that more than any other, I think, palsies the soul, chokes the springs of life, dooms the whole being to death, which is peculiarly offensive in the aged. I mean *avarice*. This is contemptible enough in the young or the maturing man; but a kindly heart will find some excuse for them in the world's ambitions, which are all before them. Money will buy a home, comforts, power, influence, and, to our shame be it said, office, court, homage. But what excuse or palliation for sordid age! I know of none but grovelling habit, which rather is shame than excuse! The paltry prizes or goods of ambition are past. If still old people grasp, hoard, dole out gingerly a pittance for their needs, clutch and gloat greedily in the very jaws of death, the sight is shameful and revolting. Painters understand this truth; they always paint misers *old*.

Respect and veneration is a right of age like a victor's right. Age has passed the trial and come forth conqueror. The battle has been fought, strong temptation overcome and its strength harvested. We hope the young may conquer; we know the aged good have conquered. Confidence is not invited, but compelled. A bright, hale, cheerful, beautiful old age is the sure pledge of a pure, temperate, industrious, high-minded youth and middle life. Therefore in that touching scene where the simple-hearted Adam pleads to follow his young master and urges on him in his need the money long hoarded from his wages, and strives to put out of view his extreme and failing age, Shakespeare makes him refer as his sole argument to the temperance of his life:

"Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;  
For in my youth I never did apply  
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,  
Nor did not, with unbashful forehead, woo  
The means of weakness and debility.  
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,  
Frosty, but kindly."

Emerson says: "I count it another capital advantage of age, this, that a success more or less signifies nothing. Little by little, it has amassed such a fund of merit, that it can very well afford to go on its credit when it will. \* \* \* \*

Every one is sensible of this cumulative advantage in living. All the good days behind him are sponsors, who speak for him when he is silent, pay for him when he has no money, introduce him where he has no letters, and work for him when he sleeps."

To a like purpose another writes: "It is well worth observing how a reputable man, though with no qualities or services to give him any special consideration, by merely continuing to live, adds every year to the estimation with which he is regarded. His kind looks are the more prized. His wise counsel, if he has any, is more respectfully waited for. The information furnished by his longer experience is gathered up and remembered. If he is put to trials, there is an unusual sympathy with him. If he bears himself stoutly, and shows a cheerful brow, a feeling of admiration stirs in us, and we welcome as peculiar sunshine the smile that comes to us from over so long a journey of years. His dignity, if he has any, has acquired new rights. His commendation, if we can obtain it, seems to borrow the power of a blessing. We are not surprised at the Hebrew idea of a prophetic endowment imparted to the patriarchs; for his very time of life is of itself a sort of holy office. He has not improbably outlived some things that were less worthy in him, and lived down others that once rose against him. If he has done this, it is an excellent achievement. If he has had no occasion to do it, that is more laudable still. He may speak of himself as upon the downward slope of the hill. It is common to speak in such a figure. But he does not appear so to his younger companions, who only look up to him the more. And unless our churches are a vanity and our faith a pretence, unless we have been deceiving others and ourselves with unreal promises, we ought to say rather that he is higher up on that mount of testimony which has God's cloudy glory at its top."\*

Sad is it when the reverence due to age is dropped from the manners of middle-age, and the respect due to middle-age "shuffled off" by the young. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary

head and honor the face of the old man". Reverence for old age always has been accounted a virtue, and in some times and places it has endowed manners with a singular charm and woven into the family life a stripe of the silver of the aged head. But when this reverence is neglected, then are perceived bold faces, loud voices, sordid manners, mean levels. Life is despoiled of its grace, beauty, delicacy; for these qualities come of the acknowledgement of superiority, of venerableness, of the sacred in whatever form. Let the young pay respect to the experience and the thoughts of elders; let the youth of twenty years defer modestly to the good man of twice his age, and reverently to three score years, and with veneration to four score. Then come a lovely harmony, an excellent fitness, a becoming carefulness, fair manners, and a pervading wisdom into social life. These, like a parade of disciplined troops, decorate the young while they do honor to the veterans. But it is only disorder, anarchy, when the rank and claims of the old officers who have earned victories are disparaged by the young who are but just uniformed. The young who are noble enough to be modest (which in truth is much nobleness), will rise up with sincere observance before the hoary head, and listen at the side of experience.

To the young, age speaks plainly the lesson of self-cultivation, knowledge, mental strength. Solon said he grew old learning something every day. As the physical powers wane and supple youth takes on a stiffness, we shall be miserable if our strength has been evaporated instead of translated into mental forms. The whole course of life should be a changing of physical into mental power. Cicero tells a story of an athlete who, when he was old, looking at the exercises of the arena, shed tears as he gazed mournfully on his own arms, saying, "Alas! these now are dead." "Not truly so much those," exclaims the indignant philosopher, "as you yourself, O fool! For never were you enobled from *yourself*, but by your sides and your arms." "Years make not sages; they make only old men." I have met this wisdom, that age is to be encountered with the whole being and met on all sides, by keeping every faculty of us in "parallel vigor," the body by exercise, the mind by study, the heart by loving.

To the old, age brings the rich reward of previous industry

and the knowledge that still they can be active in learning; that the cultured and studious mind is spared to them; that only unused powers soon die; that when field and counting-room tax too much, and more than needful, a less supple frame, pursuits of high reward and mental training, begun as the occupation of small leisure, may grow to be the glory and joy of age, the preservers of its mental power and serenity. It is a beautiful old story that Sophocles, immersed to the very verge of life in the composition of his tragedies, and seeming to neglect in his high calling his family affairs, was brought before the court by his children and charged with imbecility, so that a guardian might be appointed. Then the aged poet made no reply to his accusers and addressed no argument to the judges, but, unfolding the roll which he carried, read to them his last finished tragedy, and asked simply whether that was the song of an imbecile. And the judges left the old hero where he rightly belonged, at the head of his family fortunes.

I take a good page of the feats of the aged, though I know not the writer, and cannot acknowledge his service by name:

“ My thoughts have been lately turned towards an account, that might be made very interesting, and would of itself be full of encouragement,—that of the intellectual exploits of the aged. More than sixty years had turned their backs upon Bacon and Leibnitz and Locke, more than seventy upon Kant and Reid, when their most memorable writings were begun. But these were philosophers. I will remember, then, that the sun of more than three-score summers was shining on the darkened eyes of Milton when his *Samson Agonistes*, and the great sequel to the greatest sacred epic of our language and of modern times, sprung to light. St. Augustine revised for circulation the works that amaze modern scholarship with the profound intricacies of their subjects and the huge volumes of their contents, when he was seventy-three years old. Cassiodorus, a statesman before he became a monastic, was ninety-three when his favorite study of Language found him still employed with his pen. The most learned of the Romans, Varro, was an octogenarian when he wrote his treatise on Farming; and, best of all, it was dedicated to Fundania, his wife, at whose instance it was composed. The most illustrious scourger of Roman degeneracy, Juvenal, was but



little short of that age, when his thirteenth and fifteenth satires showed that nothing of the former vigor or skill was lost. Strabo, the prince of Grecian geographers, was still further advanced when his folios were first taken in hand. Aristobulus, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, made it the amusement of his eighty-fourth year to write the history of his young commander. Plato was laboring cheerfully upon his books of *The Laws*, at a period of life when the ninetieth Psalm, if he could have read it in its untranslated Hebrew, would have pointed its grim text at him, but in vain. Sophocles, the warrior dramatist, wrote his '*Œdipus at Colonus*' at the age of ninety; and the critics who find it somewhat tamer than his '*Œdipus King*,' find only the natural difference between a palace and a cottage scene, and between the Theban hero himself in his martial and his secluded days. There is nothing in the piece that is unworthy of its author's fame. Isocrates, Milton's '*old man eloquent*,' spanned almost a century, and kept his reputation to the last. At the age of eighty-two he composed the masterly oration in which he defended his profession against the aspersions of Plato. Then there was Theophrastus, the disciple, friend, and successor of '*the mighty Stagirite*,' to whom that most philosophic mind of the Grecian world committed his writings. He was a scholar and a teacher, and something better than that, a man of great public and private service. Tradition assigns to him an age further advanced than can be soberly believed in; and when he left the world, it was not as if delivered from a prison, but taking a reluctant farewell of light."

To these ancient names it needs but a glance of memory to add many others which are close at hand, and even our eyes have seen their shapes, — Bryant, Longfellow, Whittier, Fernald, Browning, Tennyson, Gladstone, Bismark, Hugo, Garrison, Josiah Quincy, John Adams, John Quincy Adams.

Cornaro's happy praise of his old age is over-long for this place, but so beautiful and inspiring that I will venture on it; for one may bear cheerfully to be a little over-freighted with riches. The passage is from George Herbert's translation of a tract of Cornaro on "*Temperance and Sobriety*." Cornaro had spoiled his health by rioting in his youth; but he recovered himself by strict living, making "*the measure of his whole day's*"

meat, *viz.*, of his bread and eggs and flesh and broth, twelve ounces exactly weighed;" whereby within a year his health was confirmed; and so light of heart and light of body was he in his new temperance that thereafter he "never went a foot out of the way." Thus he discourses of his old age:

"But some, too much given to appetite, object that a long life is no such desirable thing, because that after one is once sixty-five years old, all the time we live after is rather death than life; but these err greatly, as I will show by myself, recounting the delights and pleasures in this age of eighty-three, which now I take, which are such as that men generally account me happy.

I am continually in health, and I am so nimble that I can easily get on horseback without the advantage of the ground, and sometimes I go up high stairs and hills on foot. Then I am ever cheerful, merry, and well contented, free from all troubles and troublesome thoughts, in whose places joy and peace have taken up their standing in my heart. I am not weary of life, which I pass with great delight. I confer often with worthy men excelling in wit, learning, behavior and other virtues. When I cannot have their company, I give myself to the reading of some learned book, and afterwards to writing; making it my aim in all things how I may help others to the furthest of my power.

All these things I do at my ease, and at fit seasons, and in mine own houses; which, besides that they are in the fairest place of this learned city of Padua, are very beautiful and convenient above most in this age, being so built by me according to the rules of architecture, that they are cool in summer and warm in winter.

I enjoy also my gardens, and those divers, parted with rills of running water, which truly is very delightful. Some times of the year I enjoy the pleasure of the Euganean Hills, where also I have fountains and gardens, and a very convenient house. At other times I repair to a village of mine, seated in a valley; which is therefore very pleasant, because many ways thither are so ordered that they all meet and end in a fair plot of ground, in the midst whereof is a church suitable to the condition of the place. This place is washed with the river of Brenta; on both

sides whereof are great and fruitful fields, well manured and adorned with many habitations. In former time it was not so, because the place was moorish and unhealthy, fitter for beasts than men. But I drained the ground, and made the air good; whereupon men flocked thither, and built houses with happy success. By this means the place is come to that perfection we now see it is; so that I can truly say that I have both given God a temple and men to worship him in it, the memory whereof is exceeding delightful to me.

Sometimes I ride to some of the neighbor cities, that I may enjoy the sight and communication of my friends, as also of excellent artificers in architecture, painting, stone-cutting, music, and husbandry, whereof in this age there is great plenty. I view their pieces, I compare them with those of antiquity, and ever I learn somewhat which is worthy of my knowledge. I survey palaces, gardens, and antiquities, public fabrics, temples, and fortifications; neither omit I anything that may either teach or delight me. I am much pleased also in my travels with the beauty of situation. Neither is this my pleasure made less by the decaying dullness of my senses, which are all in their perfect vigor, but especially my taste; so that any simple fare is more savory to me now than heretofore, when I was given to disorder and all the delights that could be.

To change my bed troubles me not; I sleep well and quietly anywhere, and my dreams are fair and pleasant. But this chiefly delights me, that my advice hath taken effect in the reducing of many rude and untoiled places in my country to cultivation and good husbandry. I was one of those that was deputed for the managing of that work, and abode in those fenny places two whole months in the heat of summer (which in Italy is very great), receiving not any hurt or inconvenience thereby, so great is the power and efficacy of that temperance which ever accompanied me.

These are the delights and solaces of my old age, which is altogether to be preferred before others' youth; because that by temperance and the grace of God I feel not those perturbations of body and mind wherewith infinite both young and old are afflicted.

Moreover, by this also in what estate I am may be dis-

covered, because at these years (viz., eighty-three), I have made a most pleasant comedy, full of honest wit and merriment; which kind of poems useth to be the child of youth, which it is most suits withal for variety and pleasantness, as a tragedy with old age, by reason of the sad events which it contains. And if a Greek poet of old was praised that at the age of seventy-three years he writ a tragedy, why should I be accounted less happy, or less myself, who being ten years older have made a comedy?

Now, lest there should be any delight wanting to my old age, I daily behold a kind of immortality in the succession of my posterity. For when I come home I find eleven grandchildren of mine, all the sons of one father and mother, all in perfect health; all as far as I can conjecture very apt and well given both for learning and behavior. I am delighted with their music and fashion, and I myself also sing often, because I have now a clearer voice than ever I had in my life.

By which it is evident that the life which I live at this age is not a dead, dumpish and sour life, but cheerful, lively, and pleasant. Neither if I had my wish would I change age and constitution with them who follow their youthful appetites, although they be of a most strong temper; because such are daily exposed to a thousand dangers and deaths, as daily experience showeth, and I also, when I was a young man, too well found. I know how inconsiderate that age is, and, though subject to death, yet continually afraid of it; for death to all young men is a terrible thing, as also to those that live in sin and follow their appetites; whereas I, by the experience of so many years, have learned to give way to reason, whence it seems to me not only a shameful thing to fear that which cannot be avoided; but also I hope, when I shall come to that point, I shall find no little comfort in the favor of Jesus Christ. Yet I am sure that my end is far from me; for I know that (setting casualties aside) I shall not die but by a pure resolution; because that by the regularity of my life I have shut out death all other ways, and that is a fair and desirable death which nature brings by way of resolution."

To all, old and young alike, declining years bring home the glory of freedom. We are not the mere sports of events. Only our muscles must bear the slow burden of time. The soul

flourishes with greater vigor and seems more vital from the contrast. We find that we depend on ourselves, not on food, raiment, or supple sinews. In viewing old age, we read in every fading power our heritage of the immortal strength of soul which never fades. We cannot regret our passing vigor of muscle. "I now desire not," says Cicero, "the strength of youth any more than when a young man I desired the strength of the bull or the elephant." Every time of life has its own powers, which will be burdensome at any age to the idle, vain, untrained. Says Emerson very excellently, "'Tis certain that graver headaches and heartaches are lulled once for all, as we come up with certain goals of time. The passions have answered their purpose; that slight but dread overweight, with which, in each instance, Nature secures the execution of her aim, drops off. To keep man in the planet, she impresses the terror of death. To perfect the commissariat, she implants in each a certain rapacity to get the supply, and a little oversupply, of his wants. To insure the existence of the race, she reinforces the sexual instinct, at the risk of disorder, grief, and pain. To secure strength, she plants cruel hunger and thirst, which so easily overdo their office, and invite disease. But these temporary stays and shifts for the protection of the young animal are shed as fast as they can be replaced by nobler resources. We live in youth amidst this rabble of passions, quite too tender, quite too hungry and irritable. Later, the interiors of mind and heart open, and supply grander motives. We learn the fatal compensations that wait on every act. Then,—one after another,—this riotous time-destroying crew disappear."

The region and realm of old age is the soul. As the stoutest body must fail at last, and the oak of a thousand years yield its substance to the mould, lo! old age, whose strength is vigor garnered in the spirit, is the very crowning and flourishing time of life, the time that lifts us above time, and looks not around the earth but above the earth for the soul's true home and free conditions. "For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital, and not a place to live but to die in. The world that I regard is myself: it is the microcosm of my own frame that I cast mine eye on; for the other I use it but like my globe and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look



upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas' shoulders. The earth is a point, not only in respect of the heavens above us, but of that heavenly and celestial part within us. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the arc do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as Scripture. He that understands not thus much hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man."\*

"Not an inn but a hospital, not a place to live in but a place to die in." The world is a place *to work* in, and the industry of our powers is life. But the writer means only physical life; and truly we must own that on the earth dying is our only exceptional business. For we have the universe and eternity to work in, forevermore. Many think this casts a shade of sadness over old age,—it is so near that mystery, that voyage of discovery with no return. Men shrink from advancing years as they do from death. Yet when we think of it, what is there in the nearness of death to make old age unlovely? We may be shamed into confidence here by the calmness of Cicero,—“I am glad I have lived, since I so have lived that I think I was not born in vain, and I so depart from life as if from an inn, not from a home.” He reminds us that we are not dispensers to ourselves of life and death and that no youth is sure of life till the evening; and he exclaims, “O miserable old man, who, in so long a life has not discovered that death is not to be feared; for surely it is to be neglected if it totally extinguish the soul; it is even to be wished for if it lead the soul anywhere to enjoy life forever.” As the æons of the world's life, its thinking, its experience in spiritual things, the faith and life of noble prophetic souls, have brought immortality to light, whereby what was a dim vision, a trembling wish or fainting hope, has grown

\*Sir Thomas Browne, “Religio Medici.”

to a rapture, a spiritual sight, a courage of philosophy, we should equal the serenity and surpass the joy of the studious Roman. And so we shall if we be faithful. Let life be born in us. As old age comes on apace, let devotion to the noblest and highest, the love of truth, goodness and beauty, aspiration seconded by serious effort and undying labor for perfection, freedom of thought and independence of form,—let these be yoked with swift-footed time, and life will be a chariot with winged steeds, taking a run on the earth and then launching into the heavens. To take good words again from Emerson,—“When life has been well spent, age is a loss of what it can well spare,—muscular strength, organic instincts, gross bulk, and works that belong to these. But the central wisdom, which was old in infancy, is young in fourscore years, and, dropping off obstructions, leaves in happy subjects the mind purified and wise. I have heard that whoever loves is in no condition old. I have heard, that, whenever the name of man is spoken, the doctrine of immortality is announced; it cleaves to his constitution. The mode of it baffles our wit, and no whisper comes to us from the other side. But the inference from the working of intellect, living knowledge, living skill,—at the end of life just ready to be born,—affirms the inspirations of affection and of the moral sentiment.”

As I began with the beauty of old age, its silent eloquence, so in ending I will remind you of the beauty of the death which nature has prepared for old age if her laws be followed and the course of life be run well. There is a deep truth in the old theological fable that death in the world is the effect of sin. But for disobedience, we never should see death. I am persuaded that if the laws of the body were obeyed devoutly, death would come with hand as gentle as a mother's, as tenderly as the leaf or the infant mind unfolds, and give no sign. I know of nothing more beautiful than such a death, a life breathed gently out without fear, without break, into the heavens whose silver beam long has rested on the earthly tabernacle. Of such we cannot say that they have gone to another life. Life is one. When the soul thus gloriously and naturally takes wing, we stand transported with the beauty of the departure, with the soft

splendor of the setting sun, with the delicacy of nature that steals us away without partings. Saith an old poet,

"We're all deluded vainly searching ways  
To make us happy by the length of days;  
For cunningly, to make us love this breath,  
The gods conceal the happiness of death."

"And so," says Cicero, "young men appear to me to die in such manner as when the power of a flame is extinguished with a deluge of water; but old men as when a fire burns out spontaneously, put out by no violence. And, as apples, if unripe, are torn forcibly from the tree, if mature and mellow, fall of themselves, so violence wrests life from the young, ripeness steals it from the old; which to me indeed appears so joyful, that the nearer I come to death, the more I seem as if looking on the shore and about to come into port from a long voyage."



## APPENDIX

### OF AFTER-THOUGHTS AND READINGS.

Page 51. Touching the works of God in nature and the works of man, I was pleased to meet the following in Sidney's "Defense of Poesie:" "Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of nature, but rather give right honor to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to his own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature; which in nothing he showeth so much as in poetry; when with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth surpassing her doings."

Page 80. The dignity and the need of *thought* in all public teaching or discoursing ought to be dwelt on insistantly. For equally the speaker should be ashamed to open a chute of trifling entertainment, like damaged grain for the undistinguishing appetite of swine, and the hearer should be resentful of such food, especially if he be called to it as a feast. A shrewd friend said to me, "There is but one thing a man can do more unpopular than to think, which is, to require others to think." I would believe willingly that he was mistaken; for to seek to be commended by means of folly, slightness, and the asking of no mental effort from any one, is contemptible, and also a contempt of the people. Also it is thievish, if one take high and noble ground touching the giving of goods for money, one value for another. For has a man a right to sell poor goods at a fine price, or to sell them at all if he can give better, simply because the people have a



bad and ignorant wish for them? Nobler is the view of a friend of mine who is an actor: he wishes to leave his art (which as a great art, if it be strained up to its greatness, he admires) because, as he says, the plays presented are not worth the people's money, and the fraud is no less because the buyers are blind in their taste instead of in their eyes.

As to the manliness and robustness of thought, both in the speaker and in the hearer, and plain dignity and credit that it is, I noted, after preaching my sermon, these lines in Emerson's "Woodnotes," under the similitude of hill-climbing:

"Thee of thy faith who hath bereft,  
And torn the ensigns from thy brow,  
And sunk the immortal eye so low?  
Thy cheek too white, thy form too slender,  
Thy gait too slow, thy habits tender  
For royal man;—they thee confess  
An exile from the wilderness,—  
The hills where health with health agrees,  
And the wise soul expels disease,"

Page 89. The Riches of Life is such that in respect of them there is no middle estate. We are wealthy or we are beggars—as says an old proverb of Heaven and Hell, "Hell is wherever Heaven is not." A friend gives me the following words from Leigh Hunt: "The sunshine floods the sky and ocean, and yet nurses the baby buds of roses on the wall. So we would fain open the largest and the very best source of pleasure, the noblest that expands above us into the heavens and the most familiar that catches our glance in the homestead. \* \* \* Man has not yet learned to enjoy the world he lives in; no, not the hundred-thousand-millionth part of it; and we would fain help him to render it of still greater joy. \* \* \* We would make adversity hopeful, prosperity sympathetic; and all to be better, kinder, richer and happier. \* \* \* We would say to every one, 'You can surely diminish pain and increase pleasure; the secret is to know more and to know that there is more to love.' \* \* \* Shakespeare speaks of a man who was incapable of his own distress. A man may be poor, even struggling, but not unhappy."

Page 110. That pessimism and despair are features of seeing and not of the seen, Emerson says thus, in "Woodnotes:"

"Hark in thy ear I will tell the sign,  
By which thy heart thou mayst divine.  
When thou shalt climb the mountain cliff,  
Or see the wide shore from thy skiff,  
To thee the horizon shall express  
But emptiness on emptiness;  
There lives no man of Nature's worth  
In the circle of the earth;  
And to thine eye the vast skies fall  
Dire and satirical,  
On clucking hens and prating fools,  
On thieves, on drudges and on dolls.  
And thou shalt say to the Most High,  
'Godhead, all this astronomy,  
And fate and practice and invention,  
Strong art and beautiful pretension,  
This radiant pomp of sun and star,  
Throes that were, and worlds that are,  
Behold, were in vain and in vain;  
\* \* \*

And nature has miscarried wholly  
Into failure, into folly.  
Alas! *thine* is the bankruptcy,  
Blessed Nature so to see."

Page 115. In Joseph Henry Allen's "Christian History, The Second Period," there is a very noble and instructive chapter on "Chivalry." To analyze it briefly: The position of woman is very much higher and more influential in the modern world than in the ancient. The causes commonly assigned for this improvement are Christianity and the characteristic Teutonic respect for women. Both these have weight; but they are not enough, for the church was ascetic and anti-social, and the barbarian feudalism was essentially cruel. The historical influences which brought about the ascendancy of woman were,—the general war-state and the hunting excursions of feudalism, which left women alone and responsible at home; the foreign wars, so constant and long, which drained away the men and left women in domestic government and power; especially the crusades; the participation of women in the crusading ardor, which gave them consideration and dignity; the aristocratic pride of family, the haughtiness of feudal rank; the autonomy of each petty baron, which brought the women of the family close to local law and sovereignty. Under these conditions, a

totally new phase of human society arose, namely 'chivalry'. This was both religious and romantic. From it has come modern sentiment and tenderness of manners.

"The great wars of this century," says Mr. Allen, "the rude conflicts of opinion, the democratic drift, all tend to make men impatient of the formal courtesies of an earlier time. This can not be helped. It need not, perhaps, be regretted. But in the change it may be feared that women have lost more than they are aware. It is a sad descent, after all, from 'Waverly' to 'Vanity Fair.' The spirit of anti-chivalry which shines in brilliant satires on 'the woman of the period' is an ill exchange for the romance it threatens to displace. \* \* \* If we remember what was the rude and barbarous origin of society, and then think of what it is to-day, we are fairly amazed at the miracle which has been wrought to make the strong and haughty submissive, and to put the weak in the place of authority and power. It is chivalry that has wrought this fine miracle for us; and what is left us of the formal courtesies which are the defences of that authority, is our inheritance from the days of chivalry. It is our recognition of a sphere within which women can be as they were then, sovereign and paramount. That sphere, it is true, is conventional and strictly limited; but no possible or imaginary widening out of the political horizon could compensate the loss of it. I can imagine that an intelligent woman should not understand, (as, indeed, how can she?) or believe in the knightly homage which every generous-minded man is eager to pay her in what we may call the chivalrous period of his life,—say from eighteen to eighty. But understanding that such a sentiment is possible, I can not imagine that she would consent to break the secret charm, the invisible spell, which still gives her power to claim it."

This is fine and true. When woman is regarded with *chivalrous sentiment* and treated with *actual tender care*, she has her true place. But she must give a lovely requital; for this is an age of *fact*. She must take more pains than were required of her in the romantic period to *be* what a generous man dreams of her. Perhaps this necessity may be conceived as the descent and modern form of the chivalric extravagant homage to beauty and romantic rhapsody over it; charms of feature, color and shape

being transferred to the virtue of spiritual loveliness,—that paramount “beautifier of face, form and complexion,” which, as Emerson says, “is the wish to scatter happiness and not pain about us.” Therefore, I say, let women be quick with lovely requitals, and believe, if they cannot understand, that sweet thanks may go very far with a man’s soul. Let her not forget. Nevertheless, if a woman forget her grace, more wanting still is the man with whom that grace counts little.

Page 120. Is there a more sure, more glorious, more divinity-revealing truth of the human soul than this, that we gain great power to see the truth when *the truth is all we wish to see!*

“With truth and purity go other gifts!  
All gifts come clustering to that.”

*Browning.*

“The best men ever prove the wisest too;  
Something instinctive guides them still aright.”

*Browning.*

“Sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of men. He who possesses sincerity is he who without an effort hits what is right, and apprehends without the exercise of thought.” From the Confucian writing called “*The Doctrine of t’he Mean.*”

Page 135. I have not taken notice of the disputed genuineness of some of the epistles ascribed to Paul; because whether actually written by the great Apostle or not, it is plain they are *Pauline* in principles, thought, value, and represent one and the same movement in the early church. The question of authorship has interest for those who have time and learning for it; but I am contented with the spiritual unity of these great writings.

Page 153. “There may be even now arising in us a *consciousness* higher than anything we at present know, as conscious-

ness, by which we may later *know*, what we now *grasp after*.' I believe that there is at this moment alive and steadily growing in the thoughtful mind of the world, a concept of God, of the Infinite Presence, which is ere long to rise to clear consciousness, to assured knowledge.

The One that transcends both the visible and conceptual, that neither can be seen by the eye, nor framed in the imagination, formless, limitless, eternal, for which language has no word and thought no conception, which is and is alone, which shines for us in the grand symbols of the ideal, the everlasting verities of reason,—shall be the sole object of worship, of adoration, of love, as seen alive and aglow with the incarnate presence of these verities. Beauty that is beyond the form, Truth that is but hinted in the expression, the world and all that is therein, becomes hallowed, divine; nature, man, the bursting, beaming life, the speaking presences we call souls, the companions, the dear ones of our homes, rise before us sacred, clothed in a solemn majesty, and a depth of meaning that fills with unnamed awe."

*Charles D. B. Mills.*

"Conscious Law is King of Kings.  
As the bee through the garden ranges,  
From world to world the Godhead changes;  
As the sheep go feeding in the waste,  
From form to form He maketh haste;  
This vault which glows immense with light  
Is the inn where he lodges for a night.

Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,  
He hides in pure transparency;  
Thou askest in fountains and in fires,  
He is the essence that inquires,  
He is the axis of the star;  
He is the sparkle of the spar;  
He is the heart of every creature;  
He is the meaning of each feature;  
And his mind is the sky.  
Than all it holds more deep, more high."  
*Emerson.*

Compare the beautiful story and poetical imagery in 1 Kings xix.

Page 185. From a sermon by Heber Newton, on All Saints' Day, I take the following:

"The Church, during the Christian year, has duly com-



memorated the most illustrious of her saints, and now, at the close of the year, she gathers into one gracious festival men's memories of all the saints of every age and race and name and faith—'the blessed company of faithful people.' No names are individualized, for the very reason that this festival bids us cherish in reverent memory this vast host who have lived godly and righteously and soberly in this world, but who have made no name for themselves. It is the feast of the every day saints. It pronounces the canonization of that vast host of imperfect men and women who, assailed by temptations and battling against evil impulses within, have none the less striven to be good fathers and mothers, faithful husbands and wives, loyal sons and daughters, true brothers and sisters, honorable business men and professional men, conscientious artisans and laborers. To-day we thank God for the average man, the man of common clay, who has, however, tried to do his humble duty in obscure positions and amid prosaic surroundings. We think not now of the illustrious of earth, but of the forgotten heroes of every-day life, the heroes of the home and the shop.

\* \* \*

Whenever I am tempted to pessimism concerning human nature, I raise my eyes and turn them in a bird's-eye view over the length and breadth of the land, and seem to see, in its myriad little villages, this stuff of the average saint, weaving the warp and woof our social fabric and making it strong and clean and sound.

\* \* \*

It is my privilege to know many noble men and gracious women, whose lives are full of inspiration to me. I think I can honestly say, however, that one of the most speaking sermons that has ever been preached to me from daily life is repeated over and over again—such sermons can not be repeated too often—as I come in contact with a plain little body, whom no one would expect from her appearance to be a heroine and who never poses as such in her own consciousness. Poor, obscure, uneducated, her life is full of the tragedy of unrealized possibilities and disappointed hopes. Of a good stock, from one of the noblest races of the old World, it was her fortune in early life

to ally herself with a man utterly and hopelessly inferior to her. Such an alliance generally results in one way. It is but rarely that the higher lifts the lower nature. It is too common that the lower drags down the higher nature. Children have been born rapidly into this family. The little mother's hands have been full all her life in the care of them. The stolid brute of a husband has felt his own responsibility discharged in bringing in his weekly wages—entirely inadequate to the support of his children whom he has recklessly brought into the world. Through the wearing years of infancy and early childhood, this large family has been brought up as best the little mother could—the insufficient income ever eked out by her ready hands and her willing heart. As the children have grown up, with that pathos which life so often exhibits, it has been the coarse father-nature which has come out in them, rather than the fine mother-nature. One after another these children have disappointed the mother's heart, and still she has toiled on; taking them back into her family, as they have married and added grand-children to her cares; filling up the gaps in their scanty incomes, tiding them over hard places, providing for them when out of work, being all and in all to them. Needless it is to say that such a life has been one of unremitting toil, of the very slavery of drudgedom. The bitterest element in the cup that she has had to drink has not, however, been the mere toil of these years, but it has been that no sweetening element of genuine love has been added. What can not the wife and the mother do in the way of unwearied toil and of utter self-sacrifice when repaid with love? But, in this wretched home the words and tones of love are absent, and deeds and services of patient self-denying devotion are repaid with curses, if not with blows. Her eyes are undimmed now by any glamor. She knows what her husband is, and what are her sons. She sighs when she speaks of them, and then smiles a smile of pity, and goes back to the home, with its living martyrdom. And in twenty years we have not heard from that little woman one murmuring against Providence, one repining over her lot. She rarely goes to church—she has no time or strength for that. She makes no public profession, as some of our good Christians would say, of religion. She probably has a very short creed. But if

ever there was an every-day saint in the world, doing faithfully the duties that came to her, without asking reward or recompense, this little tenement-house mother is that every-day saint. Of such is the kingdom of heaven on earth. It is because there are hosts of men and women who, in some measure, are living such homely heroisms, that our earth is kept sweet and clean and capable of salvation."

The preacher took this heroic life from the corner where God wrought in it, and handed it to his congregation. From him I receive it and hand it on to whatsoever reader may entertain these words, I can not guess where or when. So goes faithfulness, handed from one to another in God's Providence; for nothing can be lost, nor can any one conceive how widely a good thing travels or what work it does before it comes to heaven.

"Heir of all the ages, I, —  
Lo, I am no longer poor!"

Page 260. A friend sends to me the following poem, given to her by a loving sister whose brother, a manly soldier killed in the civil war, translated it from the German; but from what poet or whether from an unnamed folk-singer, I know not:

"The young child Jesus had a garden  
Full of roses rare and red;  
And thrice a day he watered them  
To make a garland for his head.

And when the roses were full blown,  
He led the Jewish children there;  
And each one plucked himself a rose,  
Until they left the garden bare.

"And now how will you make your wreath,  
For not a rose your path adorns?"  
'But you forget,' he answered them,  
'That you have left me all the thorns.'

He took the thorns and made a wreath,  
And placed it on his shining head;  
And where the roses should have been  
Were drops of blood instead."

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